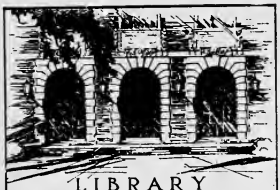

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SIR GOODWIN'S FOLLY

A STORY OF THE YEAR 1795.

BY

ARTHUR LOCKER.

A wizard raised his magic looking-glass,
And bade me search there for my lover's face;
I saw a shadowy troop before me pass,
Some clad in russet, some bedecked with lace:
Ah! woe is me! I scorned the humble part,
And chose Gentility without a heart.

The Village Maiden.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1864.

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SIR GOODWIN'S FOLLY.

CHAPTER I.

RETIRED FROM BUSINESS.

"PUFFERY, sir, downright puffery, that's what I call it," said Mr. Gattrell, a tall, stout, florid old gentleman of threescore, as he laid the *Public Advertiser* on the table for the purpose of addressing another old gentleman who sat opposite.

It was a bitterly cold evening during the memorably hard winter of 1794-5, and the two seniors were smoking their pipes in a snug inner sanctum of the Antigallican Coffee-house, which was situated behind the Royal Exchange.

The old gentlemen (who assisted the digestion of the tobacco by means of a couple of steaming glasses of rum-punch) were evidently a brace of True Blue,

No Surrender, Church-and-King men. The newspaper which they read, the establishment which they patronised, the clothes which they wore, sufficiently indicated their political bias. They were both dressed in an old-fashioned style, wearing broad-skirted coats, long waistcoats (well dusted with snuff), buckles at their knees and on their shoes, and full-bottomed powdered wigs on their heads.

"What's puffery, Master Gattrell?" demanded the other old gentleman.

"Why this piece of nonsense of James Chigwood's. It makes me half ashamed of having been in the profession. Listen," said Mr. Gattrell, arranging a pair of tortoiseshell spectacles on his nose with very tremulous fingers, and resuming the newspaper:

"'To the Nobility, Gentry, and Others whom it may concern.—James Chigwood, having succeeded to the business of the much-respected Mr. Adam Gattrell, Perruquier and Hairdresser, begs to inform Persons of Quality, and the Public generally, that, besides manufacturing every species of Peruke as worn by Royalty, the Dignified Clergy, &c., J. C. undertakes to dress Ladies' and Gentlemen's Hair in the most elegant modern fashion. To encourage the growth of Natural Hair (by using the only Genuine Restorative extant), J. C. has imported, at heavy cost, two Russian Bears from

Riga, one of which will be slaughtered monthly, and a fresh supply will be constantly forwarded by his agent in those parts. — St. Antholin's-court, Watling-street, January, 1795.'

"It's enough to murder the best business in London," said Mr. Gattrell, folding the newspaper across his knee, and draining the last drop of his punch. "I kept that shop for years and years, as you know, Mr. Pead."

Mr. Pead nodded.

"And I've made a tidy bit of money in that shop, han't I, Mr. Pead?"

Mr. Pead nodded again.

"And I never paragraphed in a paper in my life, did I, Mr. Pead?"

"To my knowledge, sir, you never did. But lord, Master Gattrell, the times have changed. When we was young men, a tradesman didn't need to run about seeking customers. Each man had his family connexion. He kept a good article, and he sold it at a fair price. Now-a-days, the man that has the loudest tongue gets the most business. In my opinion, Mr. Gattrell, Old England's been going down, down, down, ever since the American war."

"Ay, you burnt your fingers at that time, Mr. Pead."

"Burnt my fingers? I was robbed, sir. I sent

a venture of Manchester goods to Virginia just before the war began, and never got a sixpence back. John B. Warren and Co., my consignees, pocketed the money, I suppose. In my belief, that's all the Yankees ever went to war for—to avoid paying their lawful debts."

"Well," said Mr. Gattrell, carefully fixing his three-cornered hat upon his head, and grasping his silver-topped cane, "I wish you a good evening, Mr. Pead. William!" he exclaimed, as he reached the ground-floor landing, "my great-coat and wrapper."

Presently the ex-hairdresser emerged into the open air, muffled to the ears, while his rubicund nose, seeming ruddier than usual by contrast with the white comforter which encircled his throat, puffed volumes of steam into the chilly night air. Passing by the Royal Exchange and the Mansion House, he turned down Walbrook, and, after threading several tortuous streets, entered St. Antholin's-court, a quiet little paved square, inaccessible to carriages, near the church of that name. He paused in front of his late establishment, and peeped in at the window, but being informed by the sound of numerous voices that an unusual bustle was going on within, he proceeded a few paces farther on, and knocked at the private door.

To an eye accustomed to the excessive shop-decoration of the present day, Mr. Chigwood's

premises would appear dingy and unattractive. The windows were small and many-paned, while the shop was low-browed, with a projecting upper story. In place of a couple of lovely waxen busts, smiling amid a forest of hair-brushes, ornamental combs, and variegated pots of pomatum, illuminated by brilliant gasaliers, and multiplied indefinitely by sheets of looking-glass; in place of all this, the window presented a dozen specimens of wigs, sober brown, simple flaxen, or powdered white and grey. The vulgar scratch, the plain bob, the more pretentious periwig, were all represented, and were mounted on blocks feebly lighted up by a couple of mould candles. Behind these a crimson curtain, drawn the whole length of the window, concealed the interior from public gaze. There was one object, however, which afforded an unceasing supply of wonderment to the children of the neighbourhood. This was a bear-cub stuffed, placed on its hind-legs as if soliciting buns, and holding in its fore-paws a flowingly-composed advertisement, which set forth the manifold attractions of ursine grease.

"Why, Bildad!" exclaimed Mr. Gattrell, as a tall gawky youth, with a pair of goggle eyes and an enormous mouth, opened the door—"why, Bildad! Turned nursemaid?"

"Yes, Mr. Gattrell," replied Bildad, colouring, as he dandled a six months' old baby on his arm.

"There are two reasons for my ockipying such a position, sir. First of all, Dorothy, that strapping wench you saw here, went back to Hertfordshire well-nigh broken-hearted. It seems her sweetheart had just come from the East Indies, when the press-gang caught him in Ratcliff-highway. That's one reason, sir; the second is, an ugly cut across my right hand, so I'm of no use in the shop. Let me hang up your coat, sir," said the youth, placing a chair by the fire.

"Ay, do, my boy. I want to have a talk with you, Bildad. You see, when I bound you 'prentice to Jemmy Chigwood, and paid the premium (leastways the amount is carried to my credit in the books), I wanted you to keep your eyes open, eh, Bildad?"

"You did, sir."

"You're aware that it's my money which is a-working the business, and that Chigwood hasn't a groat to call his own?"

"I am, sir."

"Well then, first and foremost, how's trade to-night?"

Bildad arose, and, by way of answer, opened an inner door which led into the passage.

Two of Mr. Gattrell's senses immediately informed his brain that trade was brisk. His nose was gratified by the smell of singed hair, implying that curling was in active operation; while his

ears were tickled by the melodious voices of many customers, and Mr. Chigwood's sharp perpetual cry of "Tongs!" repeated every few moments.

"All alive oh! to-night, eh, sir?" said Bildad.

"Yes, it sounds well, and," said Mr. Gattrell, snuffing the air, "it smells well. Lor bless me!" he exclaimed, starting from his chair in great alarm, "what's that?"

A succession of low growls, accompanied by the rattling of chains, was heard, apparently proceeding from beneath the ex-barber's feet.

"Only Marco and Miranza, sir," replied Bildad, with a laugh, and quoting the announcement which hung in the shop-window, "now fattening for slaughter."

"They are real bears, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not from Rooshier?"

"No, from New York. Master says the American grease is just as good, only the public don't think so."

"And do you mean to tell me he's going to kill one of them every month?"

Bildad laid his finger to the side of his nose.

"Am I to tell you the truth, Mr. Gattrell?"

"Of course you are. Haven't I paid for your indentures?"

"Then, sir, I'll tell you how we're going to work it. On the first of Febewary we shall kill, down in

the cellar. As a great privilege, some of the customers will see the deed done. That sounds fair enough, don't it, sir?"

"Ay," said Mr. Gattrell.

"But, sir, overnight we shall have a bacon-hog brought in on the sly. We shall kill *him* in a bear-skin. Do you take, Mr. Gattrell?"

"I'll tell you what, Bildad," said Mr. Gattrell, "your master's a precious scoundrel. I wish my money was safe out of his hands. And now, another question. How comes this baby such a queer colour; it looks as if it had the yellow jaundice?"

"They're all three like that," sniggered Bildad. "Born in a hot climate."

"That wouldn't make 'em black. Why, poor Sir William Jones, who was all his life in the Indies, was as fair a man as I am. Many's the time I've had his head in my hands. Where's Mrs. Chigwood, Bildad?"

"Never heard tell of the lady."

"Well, it's a mysterious affair, and I wish to goodness my money was——"

Here the door opened, and admitted Mr. Chigwood, attired in a smart white apron and exemplary jacket. He was a short, dark-complexioned, wiry-looking man of five-and-thirty, with sharply-cut knowing features, and a perpetual smile playing about the corners of his mouth.

"My dear friend and adviser," he exclaimed,

shaking Mr. Gattrell's hand with a show of extreme warmth, "I am delighted to see you. We're doing a roaring trade, sir, and," added Mr. Chigwood, with a great yawn, "I am as tired as a hackney-coach horse on a rainy Sunday. Bildad, give me the baby; go into the shop and help the other 'prentice with the tongs. I shall be back directly. I've only left for five minutes' breathing time."

As soon as Bildad had quitted the room, Mr. Chigwood drew closer to his visitor, and whispered in his ear:

"Thirty per cent., my dear sir, on the capital advanced by you. That's what I shall have the pleasure of handing you on Lady-day."

"Hum!" murmured Mr. Gattrell, rubbing his tremulous hands together with some anxiety. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Chigwood, I don't like your way of doing business."

"No?"

"No I don't. Look at these bears. There's a mint of money sunk!"

"Those bears will yield an excellent return, my dear sir. Several epicures at the Court-end of the town have got their names down for the hams, while the grease alone will return the capital invested."

"Then I don't approve of puffing."

"Not approve of advertising! My dear sir, we

must march with the times. Look at the changes abroad. Look at the wonderful spread of——"

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Gattrell, in great wrath, "have you turned Jacobin! By the Lord Harry, if you have, you shall hand over every sixpence of my money before I quit the house."

"Nonsense, Mr. Gattrell; of course not," said Chigwood, turning slightly pale, "but you know we barbers must be all things to all men. Now, I've been curling the heads of half a dozen patriots, downright Foxites, Crown and Anchor men; and I suppose I've imbibed a little of their false philosophy."

"I'm glad to hear you've got the grace to call it so," responded the old Tory, rather sulkily. "Have you introduced that new easy shaving-chair you was talking about?"

"Yes, my dear sir. Walk into the shop, if you please; the customers are always delighted to see you. There, take my arm. Mind the two steps."

"Lord love ye, Chigwood," said the ex-barber, "I've known these steps for five-and-thirty year. I should know 'em if my head was tied up in a napkin."

The invitation to enter the shop had restored the old gentleman to good humour at once. Like the well-known candle-maker, who, after his retirement, could not forbear entering the factory on melting-days, Mr. Gattrell loved to revisit his old place of

business on a bustling night. But he was extremely punctilious. He would not walk coolly in on the strength of the capital invested in the concern. He required to be invited. When invited, however, he accepted the offer eagerly.

Mr. Gattrell was very popular with his successor's customers, but for one drawback. He was fond, on a busy night, of offering to lend a hand, and was especially desirous of showing his skill in the use of the razor. But as owing either to a paralytic affection, or an undue devotion to that seducing liquor, rum-punch, his hands trembled like aspen-leaves, it may be conceived that nervous persons dreaded his approach.

"Good evening, gentlemen all," said Mr. Gattrell, as he entered the shop, bowing in a comprehensive manner, so as to include the whole of Mr. Chigwood's patients. A general chorus of good evenings responded to his salutation.

Without further parley, Mr. Gattrell strode swiftly towards the window, selected a razor, and began to strap it vigorously.

"I say, Chig," murmured a young City dandy, whose face was half covered with lather, "look at the old 'un."

Mr. Chigwood had scarcely time to look round, when his predecessor advanced, flourishing his weapon.

"Now then, Mr. Chigwood," said the old gentle-

man, "let me relieve you. Shaving is only 'prentice work. Do you attend to the higher branches of the art, while I polish off this young gentleman."

"Not if I know it!" exclaimed the victim, leaping nimbly from his chair, and presenting with his napkined chin and soapy face a very undignified figure. "Hands off, Mr. What's-your-name, if you please."

A chorus of laughter ran round the shop as Mr. Gattrell presented his razor to everybody in turn, and received in each instance the same rebuff.

The ex-barber laid down the razor, greatly chagrined, and taking a chair, sat for some moments in silence.

There was something melancholy in the scene that had just taken place, in spite of its absurdity. The old man, firmly convinced that he still possessed the skill of youth, was rudely awakened to the knowledge of his failing powers, and sat in angry bitterness, wondering why the dexterity, which had been acquired with such pains, had deserted him.

"Ah, sir," said a fat-faced personage, who was having his hair curled by the junior apprentice, "at your time of life you should begin to think of your latter end."

Mr. Gattrell arose in great wrath. "Sir, did you address that observation to me?"

"Yes, sir, I did. No offence, I hope," replied the fat-faced man, rather timidly.

"A very great offence, sir. How do you know I don't think about my latter end?" retorted Mr. Gattrell. "Seems to me," said the old gentleman, laying his hand on the culprit's head, which was frizzled on one side into the most approved Brutus curls, while on the other the hair hung in its native lankness—"seems to me you think more about *this* end."

This sally created a laugh.

"'Tain't his fault, Master Gattrell," observed a waggish-looking man. "He's newly married, and his wife says she can't endure to be reminded of the chandlery business after the shop's shut."

"Better than that filthy powder, sir, at any rate," said the stout man, snappishly, eyeing the wag's floury head.

"Come, come, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Chigwood, "don't let's get to loggerheads. All fashions are good. Powder is good. Wigs are good. But curls also are good. When one door shuts another opens, else what we poor hairdressers should do I don't know."

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Gattrell, "I can remember when a lady's head was three foot high. Three foot high, sir! A lady's head was something to see in those days."

"Ay," said the waggish man. "Like a Covent Garden market-cart full of turnips, carrots, and cabbages, of a snowy morning. Well, them follies is over. And now Billy Pitt has got a new patent contrivance for turning hair-powder into gun-powder."

"Sir," exclaimed Mr. Gattrell, "what do you mean?"

"Why I mean, that as he can't tax our brains, he intends to tax the outside of our skulls. Old-fashioned folks, like you and me, Mr. Gattrell, will have the pleasure of knowing that our powdered heads are helping to fight the battles of our country."

"Yes," said a deep, stern voice, "helping his Royal Highness the Duke of York to waste powder and shot, and precious human lives, in the swamps of Holland. Helping to rivet the chains of priest-craft, kingcraft, and tyranny, just as mankind are endeavouring to throw them off for ever."

Mr. Gattrell stood with his mouth open for some seconds. He then exclaimed: "Mr. Chigwood, and gentlemen all, as a loyal subject of our good King George—God bless him!—I move that that person be expelled from this house."

"Nay," said Chigwood. "Liberty of speech——"

"Sir," shouted Mr. Gattrell, "you are a Leveller."

"Hear, hear," resounded on all sides, combined with one or two cries of "Turn the Jacobin out."

The assemblage gazed with curiosity at the person who had uttered these treasonous sentiments. He was a shabbily-dressed man, tall, dark-complexioned, with thin worn features; while beneath his high forehead a pair of deep-set grey eyes sparkled like coals. He wore his own hair, long, brushed back from his forehead, and tied in a club behind.

"Friends," he said, with his arms folded, "I shall not give you the trouble of turning me out, I shall withdraw." And taking up his hat he quitted the house.

"There's a dangerous character for you, gentlemen," remarked Mr. Gattrell; "enough to infect a whole ridgment."

While the audience were murmuring their assent to this observation, Bildad entered the shop with a note in his hand.

Mr. Chigwood read the document attentively, and said: "My most humble duty and profound respects to Sir Goodwin. I shall have the pleasure of waiting at his house at the time appointed."

No wonder the supple barber paid the utmost deference to Sir Goodwin's message, for Sir Goodwin was a man of consequence, and four heads of hair, artificial or otherwise, were worth cultivating. He was so anxious to keep the appointment, that he somewhat slurred over the heads of his humbler customers, singed in one or two instances their ambrosial locks, and finally delivered them into

the hands of Mr. Gattrell and the apprentice. Never since he left off business had the old gentleman enjoyed himself so much. He doffed his coat, and put on his barber's apron with the utmost eagerness, and, by way of grand finale after the other customers had all left, wound up the entertainment by shaving Bildad. The youth was half pleased, half alarmed at the operation. Luckily he was in the soft downy stage of hobble-de-hoyhood, and escaped with a couple of trifling cuts.

CHAPTER II.

THE GILT-EDGED NOTE.

Sir Goodwin Anerley was, as we have said, a man of some consequence. He was a shipowner, a member of Parliament, and a baronet. No mere City knight, who had been dubbed Sir John or Sir Thomas for presenting an address to royalty, but an English baronet of ancient creation. Seventy years ago, persons holding such titles were rarely found following commercial pursuits, and Sir Goodwin was an exceptional combination of the Court and City elements.

After having been a spendthrift in his youth he had married the widow of a West India planter and merchant, whose fortune consisted of a sugar estate in the island of Barbadoes, and half a dozen stoutly-built vessels; and, to the surprise of all his fashionable friends, the languid dandy of Saint

James's became a stirring man of business eastward of Temple-bar. His wife died prematurely after presenting the Baronet with two daughters, and it was to dress the heads of these young ladies for an impending ball that Mr. Chigwood attributed his summons.

The Misses Anerley were going to the ball under the guardian wing of Miss Thrupp, their faithful and affectionate governess. Sir Goodwin preferred staying at home in his comfortable library. He was in his sixtieth year, and a trifle gouty. Besides, he wanted to prepare his speech for the ensuing session of Parliament on the great Negro question, in which, as a West India proprietor and shipowner, he was naturally interested. Moreover, he had received a three-cornered note, written on gilt-edged, rose-coloured, scented paper, which for the time had caused him to forget the gout, and put Mr. Wilberforce with all his dreadful revolutionary doctrines out of his head. For this silly old man had fallen passionately in love with a lady whom he had seen at the Opera (whither he had gone unknown to Miss Thrupp, for he held his governess in great dread and veneration); he had traced this lady to her house; had addressed her a high-flown sentimental letter; and had now received an answer couched in vague, but, on the whole, in encouraging language. The postscript concluded with these words: "Should you desire

to prosecute this correspondence, Mr. Chigwood, of St. Antholin's-court, in the City, will prove a faithful and trustworthy Mercury."

The baronet rang the bell. As soon as the footman entered the room, he said, "When the hairdresser has completed the ladies' toilettes, let him examine the contents of my wig-boxes, and then send him hither."

Soon after, Mr. Chigwood made his appearance, bowing profoundly.

"I have come in obedience to your honour's commands."

"Do you know why I have sent for you?"

"I do not, Sir Goodwin, unless it be to report on the condition of your perukes."

"Do you think I should have sent all the way from Bedford-square into the City for a hairdresser, when there are plenty to be found in Oxford-road?"

"I thought perhaps my advertisement—the fame of the much-respected Mr. Gattrell, my predecessor, might have——"

"Hang Mr. Gattrell; I never heard of his existence. Look here. Do you recognise that handwriting?" demanded the Baronet, folding the *billet-doux*, so as to allow the barber to see the postscript only.

"The handwriting appears familiar, Sir Goodwin; but——"

"Do you know Mrs. Norland?"

"Mrs. Norland! Certainly I do. The lady has a house in York-street, St. James's-square, your honour."

"Precisely. Now," said the Baronet, colouring through his wrinkles, "some letters may possibly pass between myself and this lady. We wish you to act as the messenger between us."

"I shall esteem it a high honour, Sir Goodwin."

"Remember, close secresy must be observed. You will deliver all letters directly into my hands. Trust no servants."

"I understand, Sir Goodwin."

"Now, Mr. Chigwood, sit down, and tell me all you know concerning this lady."

"All I know you shall hear, Sir Goodwin. I went out to the East Indies with Mr. Halstead, now Sir John Halstead, the member of Parliament, as his body-servant. At Calcutta, Major Norland and his lady came to stay with my master. Well, your honour, Major Norland was fond of play; most gentlemen are so in that hot, relaxing climate, but the Major was something altogether out of the common. The cards and dice were in his hands morning, noon, and night. He was ready to gamble the very wig off his head."

"He might have done worse in the hot weather."

"He did a deal worse, Sir Goodwin. He went up the country into the Mofussil, as we call it, to

Ramgunge, where he was Collector, leaving his lady at our house in the Presidency. He had not been there many months when a terrible story reached Calcutta. The hill-robbers had come down in the night, had broken into the bungalow, had stolen all the money out of the treasury, and had murdered Major Norland."

"She *is* a widow, then!" exclaimed Sir Goodwin, clasping his hands joyfully, and showing an unbecoming indifference to the fate of the gambling Major. "Dear lovely rosebud!" he murmured, sentimentally; "then in this bosom you may find a haven from the rude storms of the outer world! So she is a widow, eh, Chigwood?" said Sir Goodwin, rubbing his hands briskly together

"Well, your honour, she is, and she isn't.'

"Sirrah! what do you mean?" cried the Baronet, starting up with an expression of alarm on his puckered countenance. "You said the Major's body was found pierced with three——"

"Did I, your honour?" replied the obsequious hairdresser. "Then I must beg your humble pardon for having exceeded the limits of veracity. No, Sir Goodwin. This much is certain. Major Norland's cocked-hat was found floating in the river. His body was never discovered."

"But surely the fish and the alligators——"

"Would soon gobble him up, Sir Goodwin. That's true enough. But, unfortunately, people

at the Presidency wouldn't believe that he was murdered at all. The tongue of scandal whispered that the hill-robbers were only some of his own servants dressed up for make-believe, while a native fisherman swore that he saw the Major's confidential bearer paddling about on the river by moonlight for the purpose of throwing his master's cocked-hat into the water."

"Then, was any of the money recovered?"

"Not a pice, your honour; or, as we should say here, not a penny. The whole taxation of the Major's district had just been deposited in the treasury in good solid silver, and every rupee had disappeared."

"And how did Amanda—I mean," said the old Baronet, blushing, "how did Mrs. Norland endure this dreadful shock?"

"At first, Sir Goodwin," replied the hairdresser, gravely, "when she thought the Major was really dead, she bore it with resignation, for—for—it was not a suitable match; but when all these ugly stories were circulated, and she didn't know whether she were wife or widow, she took it sadly to heart. The climate had already made her delicate, and she fell into such bad health that Mr. Halstead sent her to England."

"Then Mrs. Norland and the Major did not live happily together?"

"Mrs. Norland, Sir Goodwin, is a sweet lady,

with whom any man might live happily. The Major was to blame. But it is a delicate subject, for which, with your honour's permission, I make bold to refer you to my wife."

"Your wife?"

"Yes, Sir Goodwin; she is Mrs. Norland's waiting-woman. A monstrous clever creature she is, too. Understands mantua-making, hairdressing, invalid cooking; everything. She has only one fault, your honour."

"What is that?"

"Well, 'tis rather a misfortune than a fault. Her colour, your honour."

"What! you don't surely tell me she is that black woman I saw peeping from the parlour window of Mrs. Norland's house?"

"The same."

"I don't admire your taste."

"Sir Goodwin, if you saw her close you would allow that she is a most fascinating woman. She has beautiful features and lovely hair. But her temper is queer at times, and when away from her I do not love her. In her company, however, I am instantly filled with admiration; she has such charming wheedling ways."

"How did you come to marry her?"

"We were privately married for some years before I dared to tell Mr. Halstead. At last he found it out, and approved of it highly. I re-

member he said it was the first step towards the fusion of the black and white races. You know, Sir Goodwin, he is an eccentric man. He raised my wages, and I got so uppish that I insisted on having a native bearer to fan me during the hot weather. Mr. Halstead was a close man in some matters, and he declined the proposal. Some words ensued between us; I took a huff and left his service. I was soon sorry for what I had done. It is not everybody in India who will be troubled with an English servant; so I was idling about Calcutta for weeks out of employment, spending all my money in billiards and brandy-pawnee. At last I called on my old master, and found that he was just going to send Mrs. Norland to England. He is one of the kindest of men; told me that idleness in a tropical climate was ruining me body and soul, and then asked me whether I chose to return to his service, or whether I would sooner accompany my wife and her mistress to England. I was half inclined to stay behind, but Serafina insisted on my joining with them; so here I am. I must tell you, Sir Goodwin, that my wife is not a heathenish Hindoo, bowing down to little ugly images; she is a Portuguese Christian—a Roman Catholic."

"You express yourself vastly well, Mr. Chigwood, for a man of your rank."

"Rank! Alas! Sir Goodwin, I was brought

up to better things than hairdressing; but I have been, like many others, a sad fool in my time. Now, your honour, you have entrusted me with your secret, will you keep mine inviolate?"

"Your secret?"

"Yes! that I am married to a—a lady of tawny complexion. It would seriously injure the hairdressing business, and expose me to a torrent of ridicule. I am obliged to invent all manner of cock-and-bull stories about my children."

"You have children, then?"

"Three little yellow boys, your honour. And, in spite of their colour, I love them, which I cannot say that Mrs. Chigwood does. I keep them at my shop in the City."

"Then your wife passes for——"

"For a single woman. No fear of anybody making her an offer in this country with so many pretty English lasses going a begging. She calls herself Miss Serafina da Silva."

"A charmingly romantic name."

The barber uttered a dissenting grunt.

The Baronet added:

"Well, Chigwood, your secret shall be perfectly safe in my keeping. And now I will write a letter, which you will please deliver in York-street, St. James's, and bring me the lady's reply to-morrow."

The letter was written, and Mr. Chigwood was despatched on his journey. Sir Goodwin then

leaned back in his arm-chair, arranged his gouty foot comfortably on a stool, and yielded himself up to pleasing reveries for the future. His thoughts assumed somewhat the following shape:

"Why am I so shamefaced, and unwilling to confess an honourable passion? In my youth I used to boast of my amorous vagaries, whether honourable or otherwise. But now I would not disclose this affair to Miss Thrupp or my daughters for the world. Miss Thrupp would lecture me severely on my folly, while the girls, or, at any rate, Floretta, would laugh me out of countenance. Yet what is there strange in the fact of a middle-aged gentleman of good personal appearance"—(here Sir Goodwin raised himself in his chair so as to catch sight of his features in the mirror opposite)—"what is there strange in the fact of my wishing to take a second wife? I have grown utterly weary of Miss Thrupp's domination. Besides, the girls will soon marry, and then I shall be left a lonely man, at the mercy of my housekeeper. Oh, Amanda! Amanda! I wonder what thy real name is. I did not venture to ask the barber, for fear of disenchanting my illusion by the sound of some prosaic Sarah or Betty. Oh, Amanda! how shall I ascertain whether thou art a widow indeed! If that abominable Major still lives, my hopes are all put to flight! What a fool," murmured the Baronet, "the fellows on 'Change

would think me if they knew of this! They fancy me a hard, keen, cunning old fox of a man, I know. How they would grin down at St. Stephen's to discover that the honourable member for Stonehenge was in love! Well, no matter. I will win my prize in secret; but when the irrevocable knot is tied I will proclaim the fact to the world, and let them laugh as they please."

Meanwhile Mr. Chigwood reached York-street, St. James's-square, in safety, and descending to the area of Mrs. Norland's house, rang the servants' bell. The door was answered by Serafina herself, who rushed into her husband's arms in a transport of delight, exclaiming, "My darling Jemmy!"

Setting aside her complexion, Mrs. Chigwood was an attractive woman. Her hair was jetty black, bright, silky, and abundant; her teeth were beautifully regular and white; her features were small, delicate, and of the Grecian type. But her skin was almost coal-black; for it is a curious fact that the descendants of the old Portuguese colonists are far darker in complexion than either Mohammedans or Hindoos. She appeared about thirty years of age, and her buxom but not unwieldy figure was set off by a well-made and fashionable dress. It is true that modern taste would disapprove of the style, for her waist began immediately below the armpits, from which the dress fell in

loose scanty folds to her feet, which were encased in a pair of high-heeled shoes of scarlet leather. An enormous pair of earrings dangled from her ears, and in her hand she carried a fan; a most useless appendage on that bitter night, when even in-doors by a blazing fire the temperature stood but a few degrees above the freezing-point.

"Come up-stairs, my Jemmy," said Mrs. Chigwood, speaking English with perfect fluency, but with that peculiar accent which distinguishes all the Christian coloured people of India. "Come up-stairs; I am all alone. My lady has gone to a somewhat second-rate ball in Bloomsbury."

"Mr. Deputy Toker's?"

"Yes, that is the vulgar creature's name."

"I dressed three heads for that festivity."

"Indeed! Whose?"

"Miss Thrupp's and the two pretty Miss Anerleys'."

"What! the daughters of our charming old beau?"

"Yes; I've brought a letter from that worthy gentleman. But, Serafina," said Mr. Chigwood, reproachfully, "don't you care to hear how the children are?"

"Indeed I do, the darling cherubs," exclaimed Mrs. Chigwood, with an air of sentimental ecstasy. "How is Plassey?"

"Plassey has got forty-nine marks at school this week, and has only been strapped twice."

"And Clive?"

"Clive spoke distinctly for the first time yesterday, so Bildad informs me. On a customer entering, he cried out 'Shop.'"

"The little duck!"

"His chilblains are terrible. We've consumed a pint of vinegar, and whitening enough to chalk the clown's face at Drury Lane all through the pantomime season."

"The angel! And Warren Hastings — my lovely Warren?"

"Warren's teeth are troubling him, and I get very little sleep at night, my dear Serry."

"Poor boy, and does he sleep badly?" exclaimed Serafina, embracing her husband tenderly.

Mr. Chigwood submitted to the hug with becoming resignation, and then said, "But, Mrs. C., it is growing late, and I want to speak about this letter."

"One question more, my dear Jemmy. How are those poor bears?"

"They're too well by half, Serafina. Their appetites are outrageous."

"Then, my love, so much the better when you slaughter them."

"Slaughter them! Good Heavens! Serry, are you mad? Why, they cost me fifty guineas!"

"How will you contrive to get the bear's-grease, then?"

"By atmospheric pressure—a discovery of Dr. Priestley's."

"Ha! ha! you are a funny Jemmy. Now sit down and drink this hot negus while I read Sir Goodwin's love-letter."

"*You*, Serafina! he has not fallen in love with *you?*" The barber added, in an under tone, "I wish to goodness he had."

"No, Chigwood, but I am my lady's confidential friend and adviser, and she has given me full permission to read all her *billets-doux*."

"*All* her *billets-doux*, eh! Then she has more than one string to her bow!"

"Pshaw! she has as many strings as a double harpsichord. Do you fancy, you silly man, she would be satisfied with this gouty old citizen?"

"He's a baronet."

"Yes, but the world of fashion has dropped him since he took to trade. They call him a 'shake-bag,' and despise him."

"Then why does she encourage him by sending him these sweet-smelling letters? Hang it, I only had my nose near one of them for two minutes, and the perfume was charming. I wish somebody would send me such an epistle."

"Do you?" exclaimed Serafina, her voice altering strangely, and her eyes flashing fire. "Do you? My pretty Jemmy, if any one should offer to do that, I should run a knife into her heart, and into yours too! But you demand why my lady continues to encourage Sir Goodwin?"

"Yes."

"Because he may be useful. There, I shall tell you no more. That is enough for you. Do your work as a messenger faithfully, and you will be rewarded."

"I should like a little reward at once. Sir Goodwin never offered me a shilling, and I was afraid to ask him, for fear of spoiling a good chance."

"But the shop is doing well, Jemmy?"

"We had a good run to-night. But, as a rule, we're very slack. How can it be otherwise? Look at the war, look at the hard winter, look at the distress all over the country, look at the change in fashions. People can't afford to spend money on their heads. They want it for their bellies. I shouldn't be astonished if some day they discovered they could do without shaving. Then there's that old Gattrell, eternally worrying in and out of the shop. If I don't do better, I shall have to pawn the bears at a wild-beast show to pay him his interest. Can't you let me have a guinea or two?"

"Alas! sweetest dear, I have no money. You

know, Jemmy, fashionable ladies like Mrs. Norland have plenty of everything excepting hard cash."

"She used to be good pay enough in Calcutta, Serry."

"We are not in Calcutta now, Jemmy."

"By Jove, we are not, as my fingers and toes tell me. I wish I was back again in that delightful mild climate."

"With me, dearest?" simpered Serafina.

Mr. Chigwood coughed. "Hem—yes, dearest, with you. But I say, my charming girl, can't you contrive to raise one guinea? Plassey's shoes are all out at the toes, and I owe for a quarter's schooling."

"I cannot manage it to-night. Come to-morrow for my lady's answer, and you shall get——"

"What?"

"What you shall get. Good night, my dearest spouse; wrap up your throat, and walk in the middle of the road for fear of footpads."

Mrs. Chigwood embraced her husband with fervour, and showed him out at the back door.

"I wish," thought Mr. Chigwood, as he trotted along the hard frozen causeway, beating his hands hackney-coachman fashion, to keep them from turning to icicles—"I wish my wife were a little less lavish of her endearments, and a trifle more generous with her guineas. I know she's hoarding money. The perquisites of a lady of *ton*, such as

I hear this Mrs. Norland has become, are worth picking up. Besides all the cast-off dresses, and feathers, and shoes, there's the faro-bank which my lady keeps. Serafina makes something out of that, I'll warrant. I wonder what she's saving for? To go back by herself among her beloved black faces? Well, that won't be so bad, unless she insists on taking me with her. But she won't take the children, I know; with all her talk about angels and cherubs, she don't care a fig for them. Now I do. Yellow boys they are, but they're my boys. Heigho! I wish I was out of my troubles somehow or other."

Just as the hairdresser entered St. Antholin's-court, the feeble light afforded by the twinkling oil-lamp disclosed to his view the figures of two watchmen, supporting between them a third person, who was evidently tipsy.

"Hollo! watchman, what's the matter?" asked Mr. Chigwood.

"Young genelman," replied one of the watchmen, "a bit tostificated, giv us sixpence to bring him home."

Mr. Chigwood drew up in front of the party, and examined the features of the inebriated person.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "it's Bildad! Why, Bildad, how come you in this disgraceful state? I am sure your father and mother never brought you up like this."

"Hallo, Mas'r Chigwood, ish at you? No, my parents varry speckable people; bror me up Wiffield's Tanackle, Totnm Cut-road. I shay, Mas'r Chigwood?"

"You're a disgrace, sir. There, put him down, watchmen. This is my door."

"I shay, Charley, drink my health, there's good fellows. Got shixpence paid in advance. That's your sort!"

Mr. Chigwood dragged Bildad into the house, and then taking up a supple slender cane, began a vigorous onslaught on that young gentleman's back and legs. The barber was not in a passion. He had two distinct motives for inflicting the punishment. He thought it would do Bildad good, and he knew it would make himself warm.

Bildad began by roaring and threatening, he ended by blubbering and whining. When he reached the whining stage, Mr. Chigwood—who was naturally a good-tempered man, and not himself disinclined to conviviality—threw the cane into a corner, and again demanded, "How came you in this disgraceful state, sir?"

Bildad replied with a snore. As soon as the corporal punishment ceased, he had fallen fast asleep. Just then the door opened, and ushered in Samuel, the junior apprentice, in his night garments.

"Hallo, Sam!" exclaimed Mr. Chigwood, "are

both my apprentices gone mad together? What do you want down stairs at this hour of the night?"

"Oh, sir—please, sir—Mr. Chigwood, sir—I lay awake a purpose to tell you all about Bildad, sir. Mr. Gattrell gave him half-a-crown after he had shaved him, sir."

"Shaved him!"

"Yes, sir. None of the other customers would let Mr. Gattrell try it on."

"What an old lunatic! So Master Bildad spent the money in getting drunk, like a pig—ugh!" said Mr. Chigwood, giving the prostrate body a kick.

This treatment caused Bildad to open his eyes. "Sham!" he murmured, in a sleepy voice, "fyt-chew t'morrer f'blabbing." Which, being translated into sober English, meant, "Samuel, I challenge you to single combat to-morrow, for telling tales."

"Now, Bildad, how did you spend the half-crown?" demanded Mr. Chigwood.

"I'll tell you anything, mas'r, cosh you're good f'ler. Went playhouse—Doory Lane—two-shilling garry—half-prishe—shillingsworth hot brandy—shixpence to Charley—all accounted for. That's your sort!"

"There, Sam," said the hairdresser, "take his heels, and I'll take his head, and we'll put him to bed. How are the children?"

"Please, sir, they're quite well. They were frightened of ghosts, so they all came into my bed, sir."

"Oh, did they? Then don't disturb them. I'll have one quiet night, at all events," thought Mr. Chigwood, as he opened his bedroom door, "and dream I'm a bachelor again."

CHAPTER III.

JILTED.

It was morning; dull, grey, foggy, uncompromising morning, and Mr. Deputy Toker's ball had vanished away like a fanciful vision of the night. The lovely young ladies, with their frizzed hair and fascinating curls; the elegant young gentlemen, with their silk stockings, their dancing-pumps, their Brutus heads, or powdered locks; the wax-lights, the rout-cakes, the hackney-coaches, the link-men, the sedan-chairs, had all disappeared.

Sir Goodwin Anerley's mansion felt the effects of these nocturnal festivities. At the usual hour of breakfast — eight o'clock — nobody but Miss Thrupp made her appearance. "Ready, aye ready!" should have been that lady's motto. No amount of dissipation overnight prevented her early rising. She simply curtailed her hours of sleep.

The whole of her time for every day in the week was mapped out, with its corresponding duties, on an elaborate sheet, which hung in front of her washing-stand; and her great difficulty was to make the remainder of the world—lazy, careless, and unpunctual—square with her arrangements.

"Sir Goodwin's compliments, madam," said the footman, entering the breakfast-parlour, "and he will thank you to send him a dish of tea in his own apartment."

"Humph!" grunted Miss Thrupp, as she filled the teapot from the urn. "How is the gout?"

"Sir Goodwin is suffering a good deal this morning, madam. Flying pains in the toe and knee-joint."

"Humph!" murmured Miss Thrupp, as she dismissed the footman with his tray of tea and toast. She then proceeded to eat her own breakfast, propping the newspaper—of which she was a diligent reader—against the sugar-basin.

Nine o'clock arrived. In the absence of her pupils, the worthy governess devoted herself to the Italian language for an hour. Ten o'clock arrived; she took up French history. Eleven o'clock arrived; she practised irregular verbs in German, a language little studied in England seventy years ago. At twelve o'clock she had just opened the pianoforte for the purpose of trying a new air of Storace's, when a visitor was announced.

"Mr. Arthur Taswell," said the footman.

"Desire him to walk up-stairs."

When Miss Thrupp ascended to the drawing-room, she found Mr. Taswell pacing up and down the room in a state of great agitation. He was a pleasing-looking young man of about three-and-twenty years of age, somewhat below the middle stature, with small, delicate, and almost effeminate features. His mouth was finely cut, and displayed great sensibility, while a high square perpendicular forehead proved that he was not wanting in intellectual qualities, and a pair of bright, sparkling, blue eyes betokened wit, vivacity, and a warm temper. He was dressed in a style that was more in vogue with the younger than the older members of the community. The old "pig-tails," as they were called, and supporters of things as they were, looked with distrust and suspicion on the fashions which had been introduced from France during the heat and struggle of that famous Revolution. In this costume young Taswell was attired. He wore a long narrow-skirted coat of green cloth (resembling the Newmarket coat of a later date), with a high collar and small cuffs, a waistcoat striped in red and white, tight buckskin breeches buttoned up the thigh, and short top-boots. His cambric cravat was loosely tied, while his fair hair, unstained by powder, was fastened in a knot between his shoulders. In his

hand he carried a sugar-loaf hat *à la Carmagnole*, the precursor of the ugly chimney-pot which for the last sixty years has maintained its supremacy as the head-gear of civilised man. The costume we have described was simple and becoming as compared with the flunkey-like figures of the previous generation, or the pinched and effeminate dandyism of the Regency; it was far better calculated to display a neat figure and a well-turned leg than the loose *négligé* shooting-coat style of the present day. As good figures and legs are not universal gifts, perhaps it fell into disrepute on this very account, for we know that more fashions have been introduced for the purpose of concealing deformity than to exhibit beauty; or possibly it is so indissolubly connected with the atrocities of revolutionary France as to excite only images of frenzy, terror, and suffering. In just such a hat as young Taswell carried in his hand, Camille Desmoulins, only a few years before, had harangued the populace from a bench in the Tuileries; Billaud Varennes had hunted up victims for proscription in such a pair of top-boots; nay, Maximilian Robespierre himself had superintended the Feast of the Supreme Being in such a coat, only *his* favourite colour was sky-blue.

"Yes," said Miss Thrupp, between her teeth, "he looks a perfect young Jacobin. Pity that so nice a lad should be so silly. Mr. Taswell,"

she continued aloud, and with an air of the most freezing ceremoniousness, "you are aware that at this hour the young ladies are" ("or should be," she added under her breath) "engaged in their studies. May I ask to whom the favour of your visit is directed?"

"Oh, Miss Thrupp," exclaimed the young man, stopping short in his hurried walk, and crushing his hat between his fingers—"oh, Miss Thrupp, pardon this unwarranted intrusion at such an unseasonable hour, and allow me to say a few words. Forgive me if I begin at the beginning, and remind you of some things which you know full well already. You know how, from our earliest childhood, Sir Goodwin and my father respectively destined Floretta and myself for one another. In most cases of this kind, when the children are full grown, either constant familiarity has tended to produce coolness and indifference, or else the young people fly in direct opposition to their parents' desire, and wilfully fall in love with some one else. Such, you are aware, Miss Thrupp, has not been my case; year after year, as I have known Floretta more intimately, I have loved her more passionately; her wayward capriciousness, her fits of disdain and chilling neglect, have not been able to erase her image from my heart."

"Excuse my interrupting you, Mr. Taswell," said Miss Thrupp, "but you must speak with

greater brevity; you have disturbed me in the act of preparing a valuable music-lesson."

"Good God, Miss Thrupp," exclaimed the lover, losing all patience, and dashing his hat upon the ground, "and would you not hesitate to sacrifice a miserable music-lesson—an hour of crescendo and diminuendo—for the sake of listening to a story which involves the life-long happiness of a fellow-creature! You are cruel, selfish, cold-hearted, Miss Thrupp."

"Mr. Taswell," replied Miss Thrupp, spiritedly, "continue to use such language to me, and I shall ring the bell and request the footman to show you out of the house. Now, sir, say what you have to say, and say it with appropriate brevity."

Arthur Taswell clenched his fist with vexation, but swallowed his wrath, and spoke thus: "Owing to my absence in the country, I had not seen Miss Floretta for some weeks, till I met her last evening at Deputy Toker's ball. I should not have mingled with such low vulgar people but that——"

"I thought you were a Friend of the People," sneered Miss Thrupp.

"Yes, of hard-working, honest, labouring men I am, but not of purse-proud grocers and tallow-chandlers, who mispronounce their 'v's' and 'w's' like the lowest sculler on the Thames, and yet affect, in their ceremonious magnificence, and tedious formalities, to ape the manners of the

nobility. Let that pass. I went to Toker's to see Floretta. That was my sole motive. On my requesting the honour of her hand, she turned away without speaking, and whispered something in your ear. Whatever it was that she said, Miss Thrupp, your countenance expressed approval. She then addressed me in a noticeably loud voice as follows: 'Sir, I must decline to dance with you. I perceive from the appearance of your hair that your principles differ from mine.' A group of powdered dandies, the bucks of St. Mary-axe and Budge-row, burst into a peal of insulting laughter at this speech as I turned on my heel. More than this, such is the passionate quality of my love, that I was unable to tear myself from that detested ball-room; I must needs wander about gloomily like a ghost, silent and melancholy, casting furtive glances at my cruel tormentress. Did she hold out the olive-branch of reconciliation? Did she invite me by one soft glance of pity to her side? Not so. On the contrary, whenever our eyes met, she gazed at me with an expression of malicious triumph, as much as to say, 'Behold, Arthur, your rival, the man to whom I have transferred my affections.' She danced with that man the whole night. They wandered about the corridors arm-in-arm together. I watched them. Now, who is that man, Miss Thrupp?"

"Mr. Starlinghurst."

"I know that well enough; a jealous lover soon discovers names. I should rather have asked, what is he? to discover if you were aware of his real character. He is one of the greatest rakes in London; a gambler, a debauchee, a——"

"Hold, Mr. Taswell. I will not permit such insinuations. It is sufficient for me to know that he is a young man of irreproachable principles. Those who are faithful to their King and their Church are not likely to be stained with other vices."

"Ha! ha! Miss Thrupp, excuse my laughter, but your simplicity is beyond belief. So," continued the young man, bitterly, "you will accept a heartless rake because he swears by King George, and vows vengeance against the French; while you reject an honest, honourable man because he chooses to wear his hair *au naturel*, as God Almighty designed it."

"A trifling fashion," said Miss Thrupp, sententiously, "may bear a hidden meaning. A straw will show which way the wind blows. And in your case, Mr. Taswell," she proceeded, rising from her chair, "the wind blows from Jacobinism, sedition, and treason!"

"Madam!" exclaimed Taswell.

The governess made no reply, but went to an escritoire, which she unlocked, and took out a

bundle of papers. Selecting a document from these, she confronted the young man.

"The cut of your hair is not your only sign of defection from the path of loyalty. See here! When last visiting at this house, you dropped a certain paper from your pocket. Observing that it was a printed paper, unsealed, I took the liberty of examining it. The words 'London Corresponding Society' caught my eye. I had often heard of that revolutionary association, so that curiosity tempted me to read further. To my horror, alarm, and regret, on opening the paper, which proved to be an address to the people of England, couched in the most inflammatory and seditious terms, I saw your name figuring on the committee list. Now do not use any paltry subterfuge. Can you deny this, Mr. Taswell?"

"Deny it! I glory in it, madam."

"Good Heavens, Mr. Taswell! how can you use such dreadful language? Do you wish to see the Church uprooted, the throne overturned, French principles disseminated throughout the country?"

"The King guillotined at Charing-cross, Queen Charlotte shipped to Botany Bay, Mr. Pitt put in a cage with the wild beasts at the Tower; of course we do, madam. That's what the Tories say we mean to do——"

"Foolish, flippant man!" began Miss Thrupp.

Here the door was partially opened, and a duet of soft, musical female voices, accompanied by a good deal of giggling, was heard outside.

"Nonsense, Lucy, you go in first."

"I'm afraid to, we're so shockingly late, Flory."

"She won't scolds you; she always scold me."

And apparently impelled by a secret motive power hidden outside the door, a young lady shot suddenly into the room.

"Oh! Miss Thrupp," she began. "We are so sorry——" She stopped and blushed on observing a visitor. "Oh! Arthur, is it you?" she exclaimed, smiling, and holding out her hand.

"Stay, Miss Lucy," interrupted the governess, sternly; "I cannot permit you to shake hands with Mr. Taswell. He has imbibed the most dreadful, anarchical, atheistical——"

"Please may I come in, Miss Thrupp," said Miss Floretta, through the half-opened door, imitating the voice of a child of four.

"Yes, silly girl. Come in at once."

Floretta opened the door, and advanced with an air of pretty insolence into the room. She likewise paused, and blushed scarlet on beholding her rejected lover.

The two sisters formed a pleasing contrast as they stood side by side. A stranger might have discovered a family likeness in the contour of their faces or the sound of their voices, but otherwise

there was little resemblance. Floretta was tall, with dark-brown hair approaching to black, and dark eyes. Her nose was straight and well shaped, but rather large; her lips were full, pouting, and rosy. An air of scornful malice lurked in her eyes and the corners of her mouth, while a perpendicular line between her eyebrows warned the spectator that she could frown as well as smile. Her figure was fully developed for her age, which was only just nineteen.

Lucy, who was eighteen months younger than her sister, was below the middle stature. Her face was somewhat long in proportion to its width, and bore an expression of melancholy. The colour of her hair was pale yellow; her eyes were large, blue, but somewhat inexpressive; her nose inclined to be aquiline, her mouth was large, and showed a set of sound, white, but irregular teeth. An observer would have styled Floretta a beauty, Lucy a pleasing-looking, modest girl, whose expression would win more admiration than her features or her figure.

Although we have described the colour of these young ladies' hair, truth compels us to confess that they both wore powder. Each sister had her hair frizzed, while short curls hung round her neck.

The quondam lovers respectively exchanged a stiff bow and a ceremonious curtsey.

"So, Miss Floretta," began the young man, with

a bitter emphasis in his words, "your conduct of last night has not abated your spirits this morning?"

"No, indeed," answered the young lady, with a scornful toss of her head. "I am not troubled with the vapours. Perhaps some people are."

"Oh, Floretta!" exclaimed Taswell. "How can you make such hollow, heartless speeches? Are you so ungrateful as to have forgotten the love and affection of a whole lifetime for the sake of winning the admiration of a worthless stranger?"

"Sir! to whom do you allude?"

"To the man whom you kept by your side the whole of last night—Frederick Starlinghurst—a cold-blooded, calculating, designing rake, a desperate gamester, a midnight reveller in the lowest dens——"

"Mr. Taswell," interrupted the governess, "you forget yourself. I will not permit such scenes of vice to be even hinted at in the presence of these young ladies."

"Miss Thrupp, I will speak. I say what I know. I allege that you are doing all you can to encourage that young lady, who *was* my betrothed, to fall into the clutches of a scoundrel."

The footman entered the room. "Mr. Starlinghurst, madam," he announced.

Mr. Starlinghurst, a tall, slender, richly-dressed young man, with handsome but haggard features,

advanced with an easy, well-bred manner, bowed formally to the young ladies, and took Miss Thrupp affectionately by the hand. He spoke in an affectedly effeminate tone.

"Excuse my forcible irruption, dear Miss Thrupp. I know that good girls at this time ought to be at their music; but I looked in at old Toker's just now to see if I could ascertain the whereabouts of a rather valuable clouded cane which I parted company with last night. Couldn't find my cane; quite inconsolable about it; fancy old Toker's run off with it to stir the melted tallow in his vats—faugh! ha! ha!—but found something else instead. Please to examine it, dear Miss Thrupp."

"The drop of an earring!" said that worthy lady.

"Yes, precisely; and I conceive the drop of the identical earring that hangs from the pretty little ear of Miss Floretta. Permit me, fair demoiselle."

The dandy stepped mincingly up to Floretta, and took her earring between his finger and thumb. He had scarcely ventured on this impudent familiarity, when he felt his wrist firmly grasped by a small yet muscular hand.

"I do not allow these liberties," said Taswell, sternly.

"*Plaît-il?*" demanded Starlinghurst, with the

utmost gravity, laying his hand to his ear. "I am somewhat hard of hearing."

"That lady, sir, is my affianced wife!" cried Taswell, fiercely.

"I was not aware of this little arrangement," said the dandy, coolly. "Miss Thrupp, I presume the case is as this gentleman describes it?"

"No, sir," replied the governess, indignantly, "Mr. Taswell has forfeited any claim he may make to Miss Anerley's hand. Sir Goodwin, a true lover of his country, will never permit his daughter to marry a preacher of sedition."

"Floretta, Miss Anerley!" exclaimed Taswell, advancing and taking her unwilling hand, "I entreat *you* to speak. I care not what your governess may say. She is blinded by her absurd political prejudices. But you, say, dearest—will you sacrifice one who has loved you from childhood for the whim of an hour?"

Floretta hung her head, and seemed somewhat moved by this appeal. At length she said, in a low tone of voice,

"My father would not suffer me to marry a Jacobin."

"A Jacobin! Psha! what folly! I am no more a Jacobin than Mr. Fox is, or Mr. Pitt was before he caught this war fever. But let that pass. This prattle about political principles is a mere excuse, a blind, and comes ill from your

innocent-looking lips. A week ago, Floretta, you scarcely knew a Jacobin from a Jacobite."

"Mr. Taswell," exclaimed Miss Thrupp, "in thus reflecting on Miss Anerley's supposed deficiencies, you insult me as her governess."

"I care not if I do," retorted Taswell, losing all control over his temper; "you deserve to be insulted. You, a woman old enough to be her mother."

Miss Thrupp uttered a shrill scream.

"Yes, I repeat, old enough to be her mother; you use this palaver about politics to serve your own private ends. You have done all you can to poison Floretta's ear against me, in favour of whom? In favour of a man who, if he offers marriage (which is very doubtful), will never make her happy. If a knowledge of all the mean and petty tricks which disgrace the turf be a recommendation for a husband, you are choosing well. If an intimate acquaintance with haunts of iniquity and depraved men and women be a recommendation for a husband, you are choosing well. But if a husband should possess some vestiges of truth, virtue, and courage, you are choosing ill, for there are none to be found there."

Taswell pointed his finger at Starlinghurst, who stood during this tirade with his arms folded, and a quiet smile of scornful amusement on his face.

"Dearest Arthur," cried Lucy, rushing forward,

"curb your passion. We have always regarded you as a brother. Be like a brother now to us. Forgive Floretta, if she has acted foolishly; and I am sure this gentleman," said Lucy, indicating Starlinghurst, "will pardon you the rash words you spoke just now."

"I shall have great pleasure in acceding to the lady's request," replied Starlinghurst, expanding the smile on his face into a grin.

"And you, Floretta," proceeded Lucy, "pause before you go further. Are you not giving up a well-tried, honourable affection for what is at best but an unknown experiment? Think. The happiness of your future life may depend on the decision of this moment."

"Your advice is not needed, Miss Lucy," replied Floretta, pertly. "When I want counsel, I shall repair to Miss Thrupp, or papa."

"Floretta!" exclaimed Taswell, "I have no more to say. I bid you farewell. In spite of your fickle unkindness, I pray to Heaven that you may be happy. Lucy, I thank you for your well-meant intervention; I shall not forget it." And, without taking any leave of the other persons present, the young man picked up his crushed hat from the floor and quitted the room.

"A specimen of modern manners!" observed Miss Thrupp, pursing up her lips.

"As taught at the Jacobin Club—I mean the

London Corresponding Society," simpered Starlinghurst. "But I must follow this gentleman," said he.

Floretta seized his arm.

"You are not going to challenge him?"

"Oh! dear me, no; merely to give him a little advice on the subject of controlling his temper. Shall return in ten minutes, ladies."

"Charming manners, has he not, girls?" remarked the governess.

Floretta assented; Lucy remained silent.

"Good manners, my dears, cannot exist without sound principles. Arthur Taswell is a sad example of the truth of this precept. Since he has adopted these dreadful destructive doctrines, he has lost what little polish he ever possessed."

"Oh! Miss Thrupp," exclaimed Lucy, "I am sure you used to hold him up to us as a pattern young man."

"In matters of morality, Lucy," replied the governess, "possibly I did, but he never possessed the easy *je ne sçais quoi* which distinguishes the true gentleman."

"Surely his mode of speech is more real and natural than that affected creature's lisping accent."

"Lucy!" exclaimed Floretta, darting a look of anger at her sister.

"Lucy!" said Miss Thrupp, "I am surprised at you. I fear you have imbibed some of Mr. Tas-

well's atrocious sentiments; I shall speak to your father, and request him to forbid his entrance to this house."

"Forbid whose entrance to this house, eh!" demanded Sir Goodwin, limping into the drawing-room by the aid of a stick. "Ugh! ugh! my gout is terrible to-day. Forbid who, Miss Thrupp?"

"Arthur Taswell."

"Oh, Taswell! I want to talk to you about him, Miss Thrupp. Leave the room, girls."

Sir Goodwin was not naturally by any means a peremptory man, but he was in a bad temper that morning. The combined influence of sharp bodily pain, and disappointment at the absence of any reply from York-street, St. James's, had made him unwontedly crabbed.

"Now, Miss Thrupp," said the Baronet, seating himself, "what's been going on this morning? Doors banging, people running up and down stairs, voices in loud altercation; I tried to get to sleep again after breakfast, and you have spoilt my attempt most thoroughly."

Miss Thrupp detailed the events of the morning. Sir Goodwin heard her recital without offering a word of comment, and after she had concluded, remained for some minutes in silence, with an expression of deep thought on his handsome, but deeply-lined features. At length he spoke in a bantering tone.

"So, Miss Thrupp, you are a red-hot Pittite. You don't approve of young Taswell's French hat —eh?"

"Gracious! Sir Goodwin, how can you speak so! You who vote persistently with Mr. Pitt. Surely, you would not wish to have a Jacobin for a son-in-law?"

"I should not object, Miss Thrupp."

"What! are you also infected? Are you basely deserting your colours? Are you——"

"Now just listen to me, Miss Thrupp. You are a little Quixotic in your politics. I am more worldly-wise. I support Mr. Pitt because he represents the cause of those who have, against those who have not. I have got money, ships, negroes, to lose. For instance, Jacobinism would play the deuce with my sugar estates in Barbadoes. But were I five-and-twenty again, and as poor as a church rat, I should, if only for the excitement of the thing, adopt the other side."

"I know, Sir Goodwin, you are better than you profess to be, otherwise your sentiments are utterly mean and grovelling. But to return to young Taswell. He, at least, has not the excuse of poverty. His father left him a good fortune, over which he will obtain full control when he is twenty-five."

"Shall I tell you a secret, Miss Thrupp? I only learnt it the other day on 'Change. Old Taswell, the attorney, the father of this young sprig,

made his brother sole executor of his son's fortune, with instructions to nurse the money to the utmost advantage till Arthur was five-and-twenty. Begad, I have discovered that this foolish old uncle, without meaning to be dishonest, has been dabbling in canal-shares, lottery-tickets, French assignats, &c. &c., till he has nursed the golden baby out of existence!"

"Is Mr. Taswell aware of this?"

"He is not. But of course it alters my views towards him as a son-in-law. Floretta must not marry a beggar. So that I am not sorry she has flouted him. And regarding young Starlinghurst? She danced with him all night, did she, the baggage?"

"He appears to be a young man of irreproachable principles."

"Irreproachable humbug! Pardon me, Miss Thrupp, but you are such an ardent politician that you fancy all Tories will go to heaven, and nobody besides. Starlinghurst is a gay gentleman, rather too fond of the Board of Green Cloth. You take me, Miss Thrupp?" said Sir Goodwin, imitating the dealing of cards.

The governess nodded.

"But," continued the Baronet, "old Starlinghurst, of Starling Hall, Kent, is a man after your own heart, a real old true-blue country gentleman,

who believes Mr. Pitt is a heaven-born Minister, that the French are all Atheists, and wear no——"

"Sir Goodwin!"

"In short, a sterling fellow, one of the bulwarks of Old England; and if his estates are unencumbered, an excellent father-in-law for Floretta. So, Miss Thrupp, the upshot of my advice is, that for the present we encourage the young Church-and-King man, and let poor Taswell amuse himself with the London Correspondents till he gets tired of them, or till he gets into the Tower."

"Very well, Sir Goodwin; I shall endeavour to obey your suggestions. But I wish, my dear sir, you would not talk so flippantly. At your age——"

"Miss Thrupp!"

"You are nearly sixty, sir. Surely it is time to adopt a tone of greater solemnity."

"My dear Miss Thrupp," said the Baronet, good naturedly, "I admire your plain speaking. My spirit is as young and fresh as ever; and but for this confounded gout—ugh!—ugh!—there was a twinge!"

"It is sent as a warning, Sir Goodwin."

"Of what, Miss Thrupp? That my respected progenitors drank too much port wine? Exactly. And I have taken the hint, as you know. I have always been a moderate drinker. Compared with your favourite heaven-born——"

"Treason, Sir Goodwin—treason! You should not speak evil of dignities."

"Well, I won't; I'll leave that to Charley Fox and Lord Stanhope."

"If you have concluded the conversation, Sir Goodwin, which you desired to have with me, perhaps you will permit me to retire," said the governess, rising. "The young ladies need my presence."

"Certainly, Miss Thrupp—certainly. Excuse my getting up to open the door."

"There goes a good honest soul," murmured the Baronet, as Miss Thrupp left the room. "She has been like a mother to my girls. But she is a thought too prejudiced in favour of rank and position. She never thoroughly relished young Taswell, because his father was an attorney. And now the silly fellow has become a sedition-monger, she regards him with horror. I wish she were a little less strait-laced and respectable. I am afraid of her. I shall never have the courage to let the cat out of the bag, and tell her about Amanda. Hang that fickle fair sex! I am on the tenter-hooks of expectation for another *billet*, and none has arrived. I am longing for the permission (not yet granted) of paying her a visit at her own house."

CHAPTER IV.

BOXIANA.

With his hat drawn over his eyes, and his head bent upon his breast, Arthur Taswell sauntered moodily and slowly towards his chambers in Gray's Inn. He was keeping his terms with the intention of being called to the bar, although the receipt of a liberal quarterly allowance, and the expectation in two years' time of a considerable fortune, had hitherto clogged and deadened his energies. He had neglected the law for the sake of devoting his time to the acquirement of modern languages, and especially to the study of politics. The pursuit of this latter subject of inquiry had induced him, in common with most of the young and ardent spirits of the period, to adopt the liberal side. But he was no Jacobin, which was a term of reproach freely bestowed by the party in power on every one who

differed from their own views. He deplored the war with France, and maintained that if England had, from the commencement of the domestic struggle in that country, adopted a bolder policy, and refused to allow Prussia and Austria to interfere with the internal concerns of the French people, the Revolution might have been consummated without those horrors which had rendered the name of Frenchman an opprobrium throughout the civilised world. He believed—as Mr. Pitt had believed a few years earlier—that the representative system of England needed amendment, that the House of Commons did not fairly reflect the opinion of the nation, and that jobbery and corruption were rampant in all departments of the public service.

We should consider these views now-a-days as the sentiments of moderate Conservatism; but in 1795, when the majority of the upper classes, the merchants, and everybody who had any property to lose, were panic-stricken at the general overturn in France, and the increasing successes of the republican armies, these doctrines were held to be, as Miss Thrupp averred, anarchical, atheistical, and utterly subversive of all good government.

"Why, Citizen Taswell!" exclaimed a deep voice at his side. "Do you carry your head so low that you pass your friends in the street?"

The young lawyer raised his eyes, and beheld

the tall, dark-complexioned, long-haired man whose seditious sentiments had caused his expulsion from the hairdresser's shop.

"Is it you, Loveridge?" said Taswell, extending his hand, after a moment's hesitation. "My friend, I must beg of you not to address me in the street by the title of citizen. It causes ill-natured comment, and attracts the attention of spies, who, as we know, abound at every corner."

"And are you, Arthur Taswell, already waxing cold in the cause? Have you been promised a seat in Parliament for some rotten borough, or a nice fat sinecure post, the revenues of which are wrung out of the starving people of England?"

"Hush, no more of this, I beg, until at least we are safe in my chambers. To tell you the truth, politics have not been in my thoughts. I have been concerned with a bitter private grief."

"Some injury, I warrant, inflicted by a purse-proud aristocrat."

"You are not altogether wide of the mark there, Loveridge. My beloved Floretta," continued the young man, in a voice choking with emotion, "has discarded me in favour of another."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the republican, bitterly. "'Tis the usual custom of the sex."

"Not so, sir," exclaimed Taswell, sternly. "You libel the constancy of woman. Floretta has been misled by older and more cunning heads; she has

been allured by the glitter of high breeding, and the dignity of superior rank."

"Alas, poor slave!" said Loveridge, sneeringly, "you seem mightily impressed with this rival's aristocratic pretensions. Would it not be well to kneel and kiss his shoe-buckle, asking humble pardon for your presumption in having ever loved the lady?"

"It would be well to stand opposite him at sixteen paces in Hyde Park, and try his mettle there."

"By no means; you are utterly wrong there. These idle noblemen are crack shots; he would have the sweet pleasure of letting daylight into your carcase, and we should lose an admirable citizen."

"He is not a nobleman, but the son of a country gentleman."

"Name?"

"Frederick Starlinghurst."

"What!" cried Loveridge, turning pale, and seizing a street-post for support. "What! Say that name again."

Taswell repeated it.

"Mr. Taswell," said Loveridge, in a low, broken voice, forgetting, in his agitation, to use the republican form of address—"Mr. Taswell, that man has made me what I am now, a bitter, discontented revolutionist. The story is an old one; it has been repeated thousands of times since the sun

first shed his light on this miserable planet; the old story of the rich man stealing the poor man's pet lamb. My father was a blacksmith, working on the old Squire's estate at Starling Hall. He was not only a blacksmith, but a self-taught scholar, and he gave me a better education in his own spare time than half the sons of the gentry get at their public schools. Well, I had a pet lamb; a sweet girl, whom I loved with all my heart, soul, and strength. We were betrothed, and were shortly to be married. In an evil hour, the young Squire cast his malignant eyes upon this village rose. You know what women are, Mr. Taswell—'pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw.' My suit of homespun looked vile and common by the side of the Squire's laced coat. I had learnt Latin and mathematics, and could recite 'Paradise Lost,' but I could not bow, and smile, and prattle nonsense as he could. He persuaded his father to get me a situation up here in London. Harriet and I wrote to each other—for she was a well-instructed girl, the daughter of the village schoolmaster. By degrees her letters grew colder and shorter, and then ceased altogether. I was alarmed, more especially as I had had warning dreams——"

"Of what nature?" asked Taswell.

"I dreamt I saw her tossing in the water under the centre arch of London-bridge, and that I, who

stood ready to plunge in and save her, became turned to stone and immovable. But to proceed. I got leave from my employer, shouldered my stick and bundle, and walked down into Kent. I ought to have told you that my father was bedridden at that time, and nobody else dared to write and break the news to me. For what do you suppose the news was? Harriet had disappeared from the village, no one knew whither; and it was not till six months ago that I learnt the real truth."

"You met her?"

"I did."

"After how many years' absence?"

"Ten."

"She was much changed?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, of course she was changed. So was I," he added, fiercely.

"A poor, miserable, degraded creature?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, if you please, a poverty-stricken, gin-drinking, ragged object, all this, if you please. But, supposing——"

Here the republican paused, and dropping the tone of bitter irony which he had adopted, resumed his usual stern melancholy voice:

"The rest of my tale at some more fitting opportunity, Citizen Taswell. I am wasting my country's time. See here," he continued, putting his hand in his pocket, "are some addresses that I have drawn up, calculated to awaken the English

people to a just appreciation of their rights and liberties at the present crisis."

He handed to Taswell several handbills, printed in the rudest manner on the coarsest whity-brown paper.

"Excuse our typography, citizen; they are executed by a worthy master-printer near Long-acre, whose zeal and devotion are as pure as his printing materials are execrable. You know we are deadly poor; you, as a rich citizen, will aid us. Get these reprinted in a better form to aid the cause. You will undertake this service, fellow-citizen?"

"The language seems strong, not to say seditious, Mr. Loveridge," said Taswell, glancing at one of the handbills. "I doubt whether the Attorney-General——"

"A thousand curses on him and all the rest of the place-hunting crew! Print a hundred thousand of these handbills; and in a month London, Manchester, and Birmingham will bristle with five hundred thousand pikes, and the Attorney-General's head will be——But I talk treason. Farewell." He hurriedly pressed Taswell's hand, and walked rapidly away, disappearing among the crowds of foot-passengers who were pursuing their various routes along High Holborn.

"So," mused Taswell, as he proceeded slowly onwards, "Walter Loveridge is another instance

of a man whose private wrongs have converted him into a public desperado, for such most peaceable people would regard him. This is the first time he has ever mentioned his own sorrow since I made his acquaintance. I knew that he had been in America and France, and judged that it was in those countries he had picked up his ultra-republican doctrines. I respect the man for his honesty and truthfulness, but I dread his principles. They are too savage and bloodthirsty for English soil. He is a complete fanatic; every sixpence he can spare from his precarious earnings as a blacksmith's hammerman is devoted to what he calls the furtherance of the sacred cause of liberty, but which our respected rulers would style the spread of the most noxious sedition. To such a pass will the sense of unavenged injury, the sting of bitter poverty, the contemplation of bloated luxury and corruption fattening on the misery of millions, bring a man in this once merry England!"

Taswell's meditations were interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulder.

He turned briskly on his heel, and found himself confronted by Frederick Starlinghurst, who lifted his hat with a bow of exaggerated politeness.

"Aw—Mr. Taswell, can I have a few words with you—in a somewhat less noisy place than this crowded thoroughfare?"

"I am at your service, sir," replied Taswell,

bowing gravely in his turn, and leading the way up a quiet side-street.

"I have been wishing to speak to you for some time," began the dandy, "but was unwilling to interrupt the exceedingly interesting tête-à-tête which you were enjoying with your shabby friend with the long mane, if you will allow me to call him so."

"Do you know who that man is, Mr. Starlinghurst?" demanded Arthur, looking his interlocutor full in the face.

"I cannot say I do."

"That is Walter Loveridge."

"Indeed!" replied the other, with the utmost coolness — "indeed! Pity that I have left my ivory tablets at my lodgings, or I would make a note of this extraordinary piece of information. Quite in the old diary style. Let me see! This day did meet a person in High Holborn, who told me in the deepest secresy that a man of plebeian exterior and uncombed elf-locks, with whom he did converse, was ycleped——I beg your pardon, Mr. Taswell, I have forgotten the fellow's name?"

Taswell had extreme difficulty in maintaining his temper under the calm impudence of the dandy, but at length he replied, "Walter Loveridge."

The name evidently made no impression on Mr. Starlinghurst. Had these two words recalled the memories which Taswell purposed they should

excite, the most impassible countenance would have displayed some signs of emotion. It suddenly struck the young lawyer that the name of Loveridge had probably been assumed since the poor fellow had fallen into adversity.

"Although you know not the name of Walter Loveridge," said he, "you have possibly not forgotten the young blacksmith who worked on your father's estate at Starling Hall?"

Was it Taswell's fancy, or did a slight shade of colour pass over Starlinghurst's usually pallid countenance? However this might be, his reply betrayed no emotion whatever.

"A blacksmith?" he replied. "I remember two, a father and a son; the old man was a respectable village patriarch; the son, I think, left home to seek his fortune up in London. Will this information satisfy your curiosity?"

Taswell remained silent, for he began to entertain some doubts as to the truthfulness of Loveridge's story. He could not believe that Starlinghurst, if he had really committed the wrongs of which he was accused, would remain so entirely calm and unmoved when the persons he had injured were summoned to his recollection.

"As you do not reply," pursued the dandy, "I presume you are satisfied. Perhaps you will now have the kindness to satisfy me in return. We accidentally met this morning at a certain house.

While there, you did the company the favour of describing my character in exceedingly unflattering terms."

"Well, sir?"

"Well, sir, I have only to request that, in the presence of the same company, you will retract and apologise for the observations you then made."

"And if not, what then?"

"Then I shall be under the painful necessity of making a stout horsewhip and your body mutually acquainted."

"And what do you suppose will happen after that?"

"I presume that, like any other beaten cur, you will sneak away with your tail (metaphorically speaking) between your legs."

"And leave you in undisputed possession of the field?"

"Precisely so."

"To work your will on Miss Anerley, to ruin her, as you did the blacksmith's betrothed, Harriet?"

Starlinghurst's face flushed visibly, and his lip trembled.

"He is, then, the villain I suspected," thought Taswell.

"Now, sir," said Starlinghurst, "I cannot waste my time any longer. "Are you prepared to apologise in the manner I suggested?"

"Mr. Starlinghurst," replied Taswell, calmly, "you are a sad scoundrel, and I would rather leave your own crimes to punish you. Still, in these matters we must follow the customs of the world. This rencontre must necessarily end in a hostile meeting."

"What! Fight! I confess I never contemplated such a contingency. The son of a country gentleman fight a vulgar six-and-eightpence? Impossible!"

"I am a barrister, Mr. Starlinghurst," said Taswell, who was by no means insensible to social distinctions.

"Father a six-and-eightpence though, eh? Well, I'll consult my friends, and see what can be done. Most happy to oblige you, I am sure. But I fear 'tis impossible. I'll tell you what, Mr. Barrister, I can hire a very decent fellow, a retired cracksman, who for ten guineas down will chance a hole in his skin, and meet you anywhere you please. Shall I write to him?"

"This, perhaps, will arouse your cowardly spirit!" exclaimed Taswell, tearing off the thick leather glove which he wore, and throwing it in his opponent's face. Not content with this, he followed up the assault by dealing Starlinghurst a severe blow on the chest.

The cool, sneering, contemptuous impudence of the dandy had irritated Taswell to such a degree

that he had entirely lost control of his temper, and hence attacked his enemy in the manner we have described. No man ever gains anything by getting in a passion, as Taswell found to his cost in the present instance. Besides, he was mistaken on several points. He laboured under the common delusion that a villain must of necessity lack personal courage. He fancied Starlinghurst's apparent unwillingness to fight arose from the basest cowardice, and that a creature who seemed so effeminate would be utterly unable to use the weapons with which Nature had provided him. He was speedily undeceived.

As soon as Starlinghust had recovered from the surprise of Taswell's sudden onslaught, he drew back, and throwing off his hat and coat, placed them deliberately on the ground. He then advanced with his elbows squared in true boxing attitude, until he was face to face with his foe. The usual crowd which rises up in London as if by magic at the most trivial occurrence had by this time assembled, and cries were heard on all sides of "A ring! a ring!"

Arthur Taswell was a brave little fellow, full of courage and activity, but utterly ignorant of the noble art of self-defence. He rushed blindly upon his adversary, who was fully half a head taller than himself, dealing out a shower of blows, which the dandy parried with perfect coolness and dex-

terity. Shouts of "Go it, little 'un!" "That's your sort!" were intermingled with the graver tones of the connoisseurs, who saw at once where victory lay, and exclaimed, solemnly, "Three to one on the tall fellow! Any gentleman take the bet?" Some enthusiasts took the bet, and the interest became intense. Seventy years ago there were no stalwart policemen, with their meddlesome ways, bursting into the ring, spoiling the fun, and collaring the combatants. The parish constables of that era always observed a row from the other side of the street, and never crossed the pavement until it was over. This prudent system saved everybody a vast deal of trouble, and was perhaps quite as effective as the over-zealous activity of our modern street guardians.

Taswell's superior nimbleness stood him in stead of a good deal of fistianic skill, and, for the first two or three rounds, the advantages were pretty equally balanced on either side. If the dandy had succeeded in establishing what is known as a "mouse" under the barrister's left eye, the barrister had had the honour of drawing the "first claret." The connoisseurs had altered their betting. Five to two was now the figure. But it was presently evident that the dandy had hitherto been merely playing with his adversary. He soon grew tired of this amusement, and after allowing the lawyer to plant a pretty severe blow on his chest,

rushed in upon him with resistless force, dealt a series of rapid sledge-hammer blows all over his face, head, and body, and finally knocked him clean into the arms of his supporters. Taswell lay bathed in blood, and insensible.

"Poor devil!" exclaimed Starlinghurst, drawing a long breath, and coolly putting on his coat. "He wants comfort. Here, some fellow!" he cried, taking half a guinea from his pocket, "fetch some brandy for the invalid, and some beer for our noble selves."

This speech created a round of applause among the bystanders, who were presently hob-nobbing with Starlinghurst in the most familiar manner over Taswell's prostrate body.

"Lord-a-mercy me, friends! what have we got here?" exclaimed a tall, stout, red-faced old gentleman, forcing his way through the crowd. "A dead man?"

"Dead—no!" said one of the assemblage, "he's just been and swallowed half a quartern of brandy."

"Your nose looks as if it 'ud like a drop," cried another.

"Hush, maybe 'tis the City coroner."

"Won't you come and sit on the body, sir?"

"Shame on you—shame on you all, gentlemen, to let a poor fellow-creature lie here in this helpless manner. Who's been ill-using him like this? Why, he's beaten to a mummy."

"I had that honour," said Starlinghurst, stepping forward.

"You! Then, young man—I call you young man, though I don't believe you'll ever see thirty again—you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Nonsense, old cock——" began the dandy.

"I tell yer, Master Shoe-buckles," said a rough-looking country fellow, "it was as fair a stond up fight as iver I see. 'Twas as good as a main o' cocks. Besides, little 'un hit big 'un fust, didn't 'ee, neighbour?"

"Ay, he did," said another, "and got whacked for his pains. That's all."

By this time the stout old gentleman, by dint of squatting on the pavement, the muscular exertion of which act made his face redder than ever, had got Taswell's head resting on his knee, and was diligently engaged in administering short sips of brandy.

"He's coming to!" cried one of the mob. "His eyes are a opening, and see, he's rising to his feet."

"Hollo!" said another, "what's this dropped out of his pocket?"

"Give it me," remarked the old gentleman, with an air of authority. "These papers," he continued, rummaging in his capacious pocket, "may enable us to ascertain where the poor man resides."

Presently the old gentleman fixed a pair of tortoiseshell spectacles on his nose, and began the

perusal of the documents. After the lapse of a few minutes, he uttered a loud exclamation, ceased to support Taswell, who was as yet unable to stand without assistance, and waving the papers over his head, sprang into the centre of the crowd.

"Treason, gentlemen—one and all, treason! I've been nursing a viper in my bosom; I've been resting a Jacobin's head upon my knee! Good Lord! these papers are as full of sedition as an egg's full of meat. His pockets are crammed with inflammatory and explosive sentiments."

At these words the mob edged away from Taswell, who remained sitting on the ground with a scared and puzzled expression of countenance. The bystanders interpreted the old gentleman's rhetoric literally, and thought of squibs and crackers.

"Listen to this, gentlemen: '*The national razor the only remedy for the wrongs of England!*' Do you know what the national razor means? I ought to know, being a hairdresser and barber for better nor forty years in the city of London. It means the guillotine—that dreadful ingin which——"

"Pardon my interruption," said Starlinghurst, quietly, "but I think the person in whose possession such papers are found should be examined before a magistrate. It is not our province to adjudicate."

"Hear, hear!" shouted the mob. "Off with him!"

"But, gentlemen, listen," persisted Mr. Gattrell, who was bent on venting his eloquence, "this frightful machine which shaved off the head of King Louis it is proposed to introduce by means of a joint-stock——"

"Time, time," cried the bystanders. "The rest of your sarmon next Sunday, old gentleman."

The severe beating he had received, and the brandy he had involuntarily swallowed, had reduced Arthur Taswell to a state of stupid bewilderment, from which he did not recover for some time. He recollected being assisted by two men to step into a hackney-coach, the windows of which were immediately darkened by a mass of eager, grinning faces. When he fully regained his senses he found himself in a close-smelling, stone-floored cell, lighted by a narrow-barred window from above, and provided with no other furniture than a miserable truckle bed, covered with a filthy coloured quilt, on which he was seated. His captors had had the humanity to furnish him with a jug of water, from which he drank copiously and eagerly, to quench his intolerable thirst.

The scenes of the past day glided before his mental vision like the shadows of some grim phantasmagoria, but some time elapsed before he was able to trace the connexion between successive events. He began to recognise that he was imprisoned on a charge of sedition, but whether his

arrest was due to the revengeful malice of Starlinghurst, or to accident, he was unable to determine. In any case, the papers which his fanatical acquaintance had entrusted to his care had been abstracted from his pocket. Presently overtasked nature began to visit his eyes with drowsiness. He threw himself on the repulsive couch, and fell sound asleep.

CHAPTER V.

TWO SUBSTANTIAL TRADESMEN.

Mr. Gattrell was, as we have seen, a man of leisure, and was, moreover, possessed by a spirit of curiosity as unbounded as that which distinguished his famous contemporary, Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck, so on the morning after the arrest he rose early and proceeded to the lock-up, where the prisoner was confined, for the laudable purpose of seeing a Jacobin tiger safely caged in his den. The turnkey was a gentleman of gruff approach, but easily mollified by the gift of what he jocularly termed a pair of silver spectacles—in other words, a couple of shillings.

"Ay," he replied, in return to Mr. Gattrell's numerous interrogations, "he ain't a bad-looking fellow now he's washed and cleaned up. It was my missis's doing. She's a deal too soft-hearted

for the purfession. She goes into the cell about midnight, and comes out saying, 'Why, with all that crime on his conscience, he's sleeping like an innocent new-born babe! But he's all over muck and blood!' So she fetches him a basin of hot water, and makes him get up and wash. Then she sends me over to his chambers in Gray's Inn for a change of clothes."

"Chambers! Gray's Inn! Why he must be a lawyer."

"Ay, so he is. Ain't it a rum go? Who ever heard of a lawyer making such a fool of hisself? But this one's only a young 'un. His claws ain't growed yet."

"What name?"

"Now, dash my buttons," exclaimed the turnkey, angrily, "if you arn't too inquisitive, old gentleman; you're going into his cell, ax him himself. Folks don't always want everybody to know their names. Come on, if you're coming," continued the sulky official, lighting a lantern.

"He ain't dangerous, Mr. Turnkey, is he?" asked Mr. Gattrell, surveying the dark, narrow, steep staircase before him with some apprehension.

"Well, reg'lar thieves isn't. They know the ways of the place too well. They knows if they're obstropolous they'll have this bunch of keys about their ears," replied the turnkey, swinging the insignia of his office within an inch of Mr. Gattrell's

nose. "But this sort of crack-brained gentry are apt to be queer. I've know'd them rise the water-jug at me. I had a cove of that natur' here two year ago, just when the Revolution was going it full swing across the Channel."

"How did you manage him?" asked Mr. Gattrell, as he groped his way slowly downwards.

"Well, I got a cobbler to make a leather bottle to hold his drink, and then I riglarly knocked him down every time I went into the cell. By the time he come up before the Judges he was as tame as a linnet. Here's the door."

While the turnkey was selecting the proper key from his massy bunch, Mr. Gattrell drew a long breath, and modestly retired behind that functionary's ample body.

"Genelman to see you, sir," said the turnkey, civilly. "Come in, man," he continued, turning to the hairdresser; "he won't bite yer."

Mr. Gattrell beheld a young man of slender figure and somewhat small stature seated on the truckle bed before him. His features were pleasing and regular, though rather disfigured by the punishment of the preceding day.

"He don't look much like a tiger," murmured Mr. Gattrell.

As the young man raised his head, the turnkey's lantern shed its lurid light on his features.

The ex-hairdresser started backwards in amaze-

ment. "Can I believe my eyes?" he exclaimed. "Why, it's young Mr. Taswell! Lawk, sir, who'd ha' thought to see you in a dungeon? Set down the lantern, my friend," he added, slipping half-a-crown into the turnkey's readily-extended palm, "and leave us."

That official retired in silence, shooting the bolts from the outside of the door.

"I say," exclaimed Mr. Gattrell, in some terror, as the turnkey's retiring steps echoed along the passage—"I say, I don't like the looks of that. P'r'aps he takes us for feller-conspirators."

Taswell's lips expanded into a melancholy smile as he said, "No fear of that. It is simply a precaution to ensure my safe custody. May I ask your name, sir, and to what I owe the pleasure of this visit; for I presume you come from motives of kindness?"

"Kindness! what else should I come for to the son of my oldest customer? Many a year have I dressed your father's wigs, and powdered your mamma's head when she had company."

The young man shaded his eyes with his hand. "Are you Adam Gattrell? I did not at first——"

"Recognise me. No, of course not. Haven't you always been accustomed to see me in my jacket and apron? But now, sir, what brings you here?"

Taswell related, as far as his confused memory of events would permit him, how he had fought

with Starlinghurst, and how some papers, which had been entrusted to him by a friend, had, he believed, led to his incarceration.

"And to think I'd got your head on my knee, and didn't know it, Master Arthur! You'll excuse my familiarity, but I knew you when you was better acquainted with the pap-boat than with French politics."

Mr. Gattrell then detailed in return, with extreme prolixity, how he had accidentally been present at the street-combat, and had rescued his old customer's son (although unbeknown to him) from the clutches of a barbarous and unfeeling body of spectators.

"It's an awkward affair, Master Arthur; but money you have, and money 'll bring you through. Besides, if you give up the name of the bloody-minded villain who put those poisonous papers in your pocket, the magistrate will dismiss the case at once."

"That I must not do."

"What! Master Arthur, would you screen a wretch like the man who concocted those papers? You don't believe in the National Razor as the regenerator of the English nation?"

"I scarcely looked at the papers, and what little I saw of them I highly disapproved; still honour forbids me to inform against the unfortunate person who entrusted them to my care."

"Take my advice, Master Arthur," said the old man, "when your own neck's in peril don't be too particular in looking after other people's. Well, sir, I will wish you good morning. Myself and a friend will be in court, and shall do whatever we can to help you."

"D'ye think he'll be hanged?" asked Mr. Gattrell of the turnkey, as they reached the regions of daylight.

"Can't say," responded that gentleman. "As the song says:

> If a poor man, they'll scrag him,
> A tradesman, they'll lag him,
> A rich man, they'll let him go free."

"Why, you talk like a Republican!" observed Mr. Gattrell, in some astonishment.

"Republican be d—d," replied the turnkey. "Nothin' of the sort. But I hate the Pitt ministry like pison or water-gruel. Dundas, and the whole pack of them, are good for nothing. Charley Fox is the boy for me. I know his butler—a rare good sort he is, too. If Charley comes in, my friend will get me a snug keeper's place in the New Clerkenwell Prison."

Saying which, the disinterested patriot, a little sulky at receiving no further fee—although he had already pocketed four shillings and sixpence of Mr. Gattrell's money—showed the ex-hairdresser out.

The old gentleman immediately proceeded to

St. Antholin's-court, where he found Mr. Chigwood, the three children, and the two apprentices, seated at breakfast. Bread-and-milk formed the staple of the repast.

"Good morning, my dear sir," exclaimed Mr. Chigwood, greeting the former proprietor with extreme politeness. "Permit me to help you off with your coat, sir. You're an early bird, sir, and early birds——"

"Picks up the wums," exclaimed Plassey, with preternatural acuteness.

"Plassey," said his father, "hold your tongue till you're asked to speak. Have you finished your bread-and-milk?"

"Yes, pa."

"Then get ready for school, my dear. Here, Bildad, finish feeding baby."

"What's the matter with Bildad's eye?" asked Mr. Gattrell.

"Run up agen a lamp-post," answered Bildad.

"And what's the matter with Sam's eye?"

"Run up agen a lamp-post," answered Bildad, making the most frightfully threatening grimaces at Sam in case he should dare to tell the truth.

"Sing'ler," remarked Mr. Gattrell. "Should have thought the boys had been fighting. Talking of fighting, Mr. Chigwood, I saw a fight yesterday in Featherstone-buildings, High Holborn, that's

ended in the most melancholy manner. I've been to prison this morning."

"To prison, my dear sir?"

"Ay."

Mr. Gattrell then related the circumstances of Arthur Taswell's arrest.

"Now I want you and me to go to court and bail him out."

"My dear Mr. Gattrell, I fear that in the present state of business I shall not be able——"

"Can't meet the bail in case of its forfeiture, eh? But I will be answerable for both. I only want your name. There must be two parties to a bail besides the prisoner. Now, how's trade?"

"Well, sir, we mustn't complain. Two common-councillor's heads came in last night, and I've the promise of an alderman's on Thursday. Owing to the severity of the weather, shaving is very dull."

"And the bears?"

"As healthy as if in their native forests. Confound them," added Mr. Chigwood, aside. "Bildad, go and clean their cages, and give 'em their breakfast; and you, Sam, sweep up the shop, and get the brushes washed. Plassey, be off to school, sir?"

"What a strange colour your children are, to be sure, Mr. Chigwood!"

"My children, Mr. Gattrell? They're not my children. They are entrusted to me by a Bengalee princess, for the sake of English education."

"Please, pa," said Plassey, returning with his satchel on his arm, "you said the next time you went to St. James's you'd ask ma to buy me a new pair of boots."

"Go to school, sir," thundered Mr. Chigwood. "The child doesn't know what he's talking about," he remarked to his visitor.

Mr. Gattrell smiled slyly. "Mr. Chigwood," he said, "the sooner you're ready the better. Sitting magistrates wait for no man." And having delivered this dictum, the old gentleman strolled into the shop, and by way of pastime began to strop a razor.

Meanwhile Mr. Chigwood retired to complete his toilette, and presently emerged from the house arrayed in a complete suit of snuff-colour. His scanty hair was carefully powdered, but he wore a round hat, and his shoes were tied with string. In truth, as befitted a tradesman who had to live by the public, he wished to please everybody, and combined, as much as possible, the costumes of the old and new regimes in his own person. Mr. Gattrell received him with a grunt of qualified approval, and taking him by the arm, marched him off to the court.

"Sam!" cried Bildad, depositing Warren Hast-

ings upon the floor as soon as the two seniors had taken their departure. "Sam!"

"Yes, Bildad," responded Sam, meekly.

"Keep an eye on this young blackamoor," said the elder apprentice, consequentially, cocking his hat, and trying the effect in the shop-mirror. "I'm going out."

"Please, Bildad, I thought master said we was both to stay at home."

"You thought! Do you want another hiding?" exclaimed Bildad, ferociously advancing with clenched fists. "Tell yer I'm going out. I've got business in Bucklersbury, business in Barbican, business in Thames-street. Where's Clive?"

"Pretending to shave himself in the bedroom."

"Not with a razor?"

"No; master's pocket-comb."

"He'll do, then. If Chig comes in before I do, say Councillor Jones sent for me to dress his head for the Dowgate Wardmote." And Bildad, having arranged his hat to his taste, sallied forth with his hands thrust into the skirt-pockets of his coat, humming a popular air:

> "I'm the knowing lad, that's not to be had,
> So keep the game alive, oh!
> You had me, you see, in ninety-three,
> But you won't in ninety-five, oh!" *

About an hour after his departure, a hackney-

* From "The Modern Apollo," published 1796.

coach drew up at the end of the court, from which an elderly gentleman, wrapped in a voluminous roquelaure, and muffled up to the ears, descended by the aid of the driver. Leaning on the coachman's arm, and supported by a stick, he entered the hairdresser's shop, and having seated himself in Mr. Chigwood's patent easy-shaving chair, dismissed the driver, with instructions to await his pleasure.

"Shave, your honour?" began Sam, advancing with a baby on either arm.

"Why no, my boy," said the gentleman, with an amused smile. "You seem tolerably well occupied already. But nursery-maids should not indulge in black eyes. How do you account for this?" he added, pointing to Sam's discoloured optic.

"Please, your honour, Bildad did it. He's always a-whacking of me."

"And who may Bildad be?"

"He's the big 'prentice."

"And you're the little 'prentice. Well, well. Such is human nature. And where's Mr. Chigwood?"

"Gone to court, your honour."

"What! the Bankruptcy Court?"

"I don't know, your honour. He's gone along with Mr. Gattrell to get a gentleman out of prison."

"A highly charitable proceeding. And who is this unlucky wight in prison?"

"I heard Mr. Gattrell say it was Mr. Taswell, that he was going to cut off King George's head, so they put him in the watch-house."

"Vastly proper to do so, upon my word. This is interesting intelligence," said the gentleman to himself. "I must await Chigwood's return. Boy!"

"Yes, your honour."

"Take this half-crown, and run out and buy me three or four newspapers—the *Times*, *Post*, *Chronicle*, and *Oracle*. I must amuse myself till this worthy barber returns. And look sharp, for I don't understand babies, and I won't warrant these copper-coloured youngsters safe from the fire."

Sam departed on his errand with feelings of awe. "This," he argued, "must be a person of quality. I never heard of anybody reading three newspapers at once in my life!"

"So Master Taswell's hot-brained political folly has brought him within the grasp of the law," said Sir Goodwin Anerley, musing. "The event could not happen at a better opportunity. It will relieve me from any danger of Floretta reverting to her old love. I wonder whether the young gentleman is aware of his altered prospects. For the *bouleversement* has taken place; old Tobias Taswell has stopped payment, and the Exchange

gossip says his estate won't pay threepence in the pound. Consequently young Taswell is a beggar."

Sir Goodwin skimmed over his newspapers with a contemptuous indifferent air, to the astonishment of Sam, who had been accustomed to see Mr. Gattrell read slowly and methodically from the theatrical announcements in the first column, to the printer's name at the end of the fourth page. After an hour or two of this amusement, voices were heard outside the door.

"Stupid piece of obstinacy, I call it," said Mr. Gattrell. "'Give up the party's name that printed this,' said their worships, 'and we are willing to accept bail.' They could see I looked like a substantial tradesman, couldn't they, Mr. Chigwood?"

"No doubt of it, sir," replied that gentleman. "Well, Mr. Gattrell, won't you step in and taste a drop of Schiedam this bitter cold morning?"

"I don't care if I do, sir," said the ex-proprietor, smacking his lips as they entered the shop.

"So, Chigwood, Mr. Taswell is still in custody?" asked Sir Goodwin, leaning back languidly in his chair.

"Lord, Sir Goodwin!" exclaimed Mr. Chigwood, whipping off his hat, and making a profound bow, "who'd have thought of seeing your honour? Take off your hat, Gattrell. This is Sir Goodwin Anerley, Baronet."

Mr. Gattrell paid his homage accordingly, and remained standing.

"Now, my friends," said the Baronet, "take this glass of Hollands I overheard you proposing, and give me a glass as well. Then sit down, and tell me all about this affair."

Sir Goodwin listened to the detail in silence. When it was concluded, he said, "So, Mr. Gattrell, you went prepared to bail out this young gentleman?"

"Certainly, your honour. He is the son of one of my oldest and most respected customers. I could not endure to see him in jail."

"The sentiment does your heart credit. He is a wealthy young man, too, is he not?"

"Old Mr. Taswell died worth ten thousand pound, your honour, and if Mr. Tobias han't made it twenty thousand by the time this young gentleman is five-and-twenty, I shall be astonished."

"Had his nephew been penniless, you would still have offered to bail him?"

"I should, your honour; his father was a good friend to me, and has paid me many a guinea."

"Well, you'll have an opportunity of displaying your disinterestedness at the next appearance of the prisoner. Read this," said Sir Goodwin, handing Mr. Gattrell the newspaper.

"Mercy upon us!" exclaimed the old hairdresser, turning white almost to the tip of his

nose. "What a wicked world this is! Stopped payment! ruined! gambling speculations! Oh dear, dear, dear! What a providential escape!"

"What do you think now?" demanded Sir Goodwin.

"Think, your honour!" replied the worthy perruquier; "I think he's a pestilent young Jacobin, who deserves all he's got. Like uncle, like nephew. And I wasted four-and-sixpence on him this blessed morning! I wish your honour good day," concluded Mr. Gattrell, taking his hat, and quitting the house with a low bow.

"Human nature, friend Chigwood — human nature," said the Baronet, quietly. "And now, sir, how is it you have no intelligence from St. James's?"

"I ask your honour's humble pardon. I have a letter in my pocket."

"Give it me," exclaimed the elderly lover, eagerly. "So, sir, you preferred dancing attendance on this vulgar tradesman to executing my commissions?"

"Again I ask pardon, Sir Goodwin. But I am at the mercy of this man. I owe him money. Besides, I conceived, on hearing the name of Taswell, that your honour would naturally be interested——"

"Why so?"

"With all deference, Sir Goodwin, was he not betrothed to Miss Floretta?"

"Idiot! Do you suppose my girl should marry a beggar?"

"Oh! of course, your honour, the case is altered now. But——"

"Say no more! Show me into a quiet room, if you have one, and provide me with pen, ink, and paper."

The obsequious barber bustled about, hastily arranged the parlour, thrust Sam and the children into the attic, and then reverently ushered Sir Goodwin into the apartment prepared for him.

The Baronet seated himself, and opened the letter with tremulous anxiety. It was short, but by no means discouraging.

"Amanda has received Sir Goodwin's epistle. Happy would she be could she believe that the impassioned utterances it contains were dictated by a heart conscious of its own truth and purity. But she has had sad experience of the fickleness and falsity of man's love. Yet she will once more entrust herself to the enchanting dream of a high, noble, mutually-reciprocated affection. If such be Sir Goodwin's sentiments, she will be at home on Thursday evening next, at seven o'clock."

The Baronet composed a suitable reply, in similarly high-flown language, which he delivered

to Mr. Chigwood, and then departed in his hackney-coach to the counting-house.

After many hours' absence, Bildad returned to the shop with an air of easy assurance. He was confronted by his master.

"Well, sir," he began, "you are a pretty fellow for an apprentice. Where have you been?"

"To dress Councillor Jones's head."

"That is a lie. Sam has told me that tale already. Liars should have good memories. Perhaps you don't recollect that Councillor Jones went into curls after Christmas."

Mr. Chigwood took up his cane, and seized Bildad by the collar.

"You won't thrash me, master," said Bildad, coolly.

"Won't thrash you, you young villain!" exclaimed Mr. Chigwood. "You'll soon see if I won't."

"No you won't; or if you do, you'll repent it."

"What do you mean, sirrah!"

"Do you know the fourteenth of July, master?"

Mr. Chigwood changed colour slightly. "What of that?" he asked.

"It's the anniwersary of the Feast of Pikes, ain't it, over there?" continued Bildad, extending his arm towards Hampstead for the purpose of indicating France. "It's the anniwersary of the captivating of the Bastille, ain't it, master?"

Mr. Chigwood released the culprit's collar.

"Young scoundrel, what are you driving at?"

"You'll soon see. Do you know the B. C.? I'm a member, so are you!"

"Good Heavens! And have they admitted a young stripling like you?"

"Stripling or not, I'm the boy as will stick at nothing. They will find me useful. If there's any work to be done as wants a stern heart, a strong hand, and a hunrelenting temper, I'm the cove for their money. And here's a notice," continued Bildad, taking from his pocket a dirty, ill-folded paper. "You're to be there at nine o'clock to-night."

Mr. Chigwood read the document and heaved a deep sigh. "Well, Bildad," he said, humbly, "I suppose you'll do your work as usual?"

"Citizen Chigwood, I shall. But whether nursing babies is an occupation worthy of an enlightened republican, I am doubtful. I should like to bring it before the committee. However, here goes." And Bildad took up Warren Hastings, who was rather fractious, and began to soothe him with the Marseillaise Hymn.

Mr. Chigwood retired to his inner chamber, and applied for consolation to a certain square, green bottle, which had been in requisition once already that morning. He smacked his lips and sighed again.

"I'm in a peck of troubles," he said to himself. "There are these abominable bears eating me out of house and home; there's old Gattrell everlastingly prying into the business; there's my precious black wife as stingy as Daniel Dancer, and as ferocious as one of her native tigresses; there's Sir Goodwin's love affair; and now this young cockatrice, Bildad, has contrived to discover that I belong to a secret society. What made me enter it I know not, for I believe in my heart these republican gentry are as bad as anybody else. Just as fond of money and power, and a precious sight more sanguinary. Vanity is the secret of my membership. I love to hear my tongue wag, and I flatter myself I can hold forth as well as Thelwall or Horne Tooke."

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ICE.

As soon as he had suggested to the mob that Arthur Taswell should be given into custody, Mr. Starlinghurst glided unperceived through the rapidly increasing crowd, and returned to his own lodgings. He had no wish to be further mixed up with the affair, of which he felt altogether somewhat ashamed. In the first place, the whole thing was tinged with absurdity. There was no disgrace in the fact of a gentleman who, to use the phrase of the day, "had been to school," in other words, who had studied boxing, making use of his fists, provided he did so at the proper time and with the proper people. According to the stern laws of fashion, the correct time for fighting was between midnight and four o'clock in the morning, and the correct people to fight with were "Charleys,"

hackney-coachmen, chairmen, and bargees. But there was something supremely ridiculous in the idea of a bout at fisticuffs in broad daylight, close to High Holborn, between a man of fashion and a person only slightly inferior in rank to himself, concerning the right to make love to a young lady. "Why," said Starlinghurst to himself, "when I reflect calmly over the matter, it was a piece of *grossièreté* worthy of the Seven Dials, where Paddy and Phelim settle their right to Norah in this summary fashion."

"Purkess," said the dandy to his valet, as he entered his lodgings, "a piece of raw beefsteak for my eye."

The servant bowed, and departed in silence. He presently returned with the required remedy, bowed again without speaking, and quitted the room.

Mr. Purkess was a character in his way. He had been a waiter at an obscure country inn, where Starlinghurst saw him, and noted his singularly reserved manner. The dandy had got weary of a succession of chattering, scandal-retailing valets, who all proved useless when any real work was to be done, so he made an offer to Mr. Purkess, which that gentleman accepted, after due deliberation, in as few words as possible. He possessed the invaluable gift of never being deprived of his presence of mind by any event whatever, and he seldom asked questions. Instead of saying "Shall

I bring up your honour's hot water now?" he brought the hot water unasked, having accurately studied his master's habits. As for being guilty of such an enormity as sympathising with his employer on his optical contusion, Mr. Purkess would sooner have sacrificed his situation on the spot. There were times, especially if he were poorly or low-spirited, when Mr. Starlinghurst wished his worthy valet was somewhat more communicative. He was so silent, so noiseless, so automaton-like, that Starlinghurst half shuddered, and felt inclined to pinch him in order to learn whether he were real flesh and blood, or a cunning system of wires, like Von Kempelen's chess-player.

"If his Royal Highness the Heir Apparent," murmured Starlinghurst, as he reclined on the sofa, "knew the origin of this contused eye of mine (I hope to Heaven it won't be black!), he would dress up such a story about it that the whole town would ring with laughter inextinguishable, and I should have to hide my head for three months at some such delightfully retired spot as Brighthelmstone. Luckily, the Prince is too busy preparing for married life—ahem!"

Let us take the opportunity, while the dandy is seated thus, of sketching as briefly as possible his earlier career, for the purpose of ascertaining whether he was the scoundrel whom Loveridge described him, and whom Taswell believed him to be.

In the usual narratives of woman's sad declension from the paths of virtue we are apt to depict on the one side a simple, loving, affectionate girl; on the other, a cold-blooded, hypocritical, plotting villain, who purposes beforehand to desert his victim as soon as he has robbed her of her greatest treasure. Such characters as these are rarely met with in real life. The culpability is usually more evenly distributed. But the punishment, as we know, generally falls almost exclusively on the weaker and more helpless partner in the transaction.

Frederick Starlinghurst was the only child of Mr. Starlinghurst, of Starling Hall, in the parish of Fessenden, Kent. Like many only children, he was too carefully brought up, if such an expression may be used. His mother overdosed him with moral instruction, though, at the same time, she indulged his faintest whim. His father, on the contrary, believing in the divine right of parents, and the wisdom of King Solomon's educational maxims, treated him with a stern, repressive severity, seldom seen now-a-days. The unlucky boy was the cause of many an unpleasant wrangle between his father and mother, who each clung fondly to their own system, for their beliefs were as far apart as those of courtier and patriot, who, as Cowper tells us, "cannot mix their heterogeneous politics without an effervescence." The effect was, that the youth grew up to manhood,

hating study and hating control; dreading his father, and not loving his mother with any particular ardour. When he was eighteen, which was in the year 1783, just after the Peace of Paris, his father sent him abroad for a couple of years, whence he returned with a fine coating of French polish over his other superficial acquirements, and a complete disregard for scruples (acquired in the atmosphere of the Palais Royal) where the honour of women was concerned. An apparently trivial circumstance led to the story we are about to narrate. The poor of the parish had an ancient right to cut furze on certain days of the year on Fessenden Heath. Young Starlinghurst had just returned from the Continent, and was idly strolling about well-remembered scenes of his earlier days. Crossing one of the loneliest portions of the heath, he came upon an elderly man, who was seated on the ground in great distress. In attempting to cut furze he had wounded his foot severely with a bill-hook, and had nearly fainted from loss of blood. There was no other person at hand, but the young squire was not devoid of common kindness, he removed the sufferer's shoe, bound up the wound with his cambric handkerchief, and helped him to limp homewards. They soon met other labourers, who rendered more efficient aid by carrying Mr. Petworth home on what is called "a Scotch chair." On reaching the Hall, the young man naturally

related the circumstance, and inquired who Mr. Petworth might be. He learnt that he was the village schoolmaster recently appointed, a clever, well educated, but miserly old fellow, who deserved his maimed foot for poaching on the poor man's preserve. Had this been all, probably the young squire would never have gone near the schoolmaster again, but he found that he had a daughter famed for her beauty. French fashion prescribed that he should visit the girl and report on her good looks. He went accordingly, and came back, not only astonished but enraptured. He had seen the beauties of Versailles, but he had only seen one person who could be compared with Harriet Petworth. That was the Princess de Lamballe; but even she was past her bloom. Here was her image in the English style at the age of nineteen. This young village rose had a lover by the name of William Lancefield; in fact, they were betrothed. Young Starlinghurst, who frequently visited the cottage, and delighted the old man by presenting him with a packet of snuff (the same as inhaled by the celebrated Monsieur Calonne, the French Finance Minister), soon discovered that Harriet did not really love Lancefield, but that the match had been eagerly encouraged by her father, who was impressed with a belief that old Lancefield, the blacksmith, had plenty of guineas stowed away in various secret corners of his rickety dwelling.

The young squire also discovered that Harriet did love himself, strongly and passionately. Besides, she was dazzled by his superior rank. She had dreamt, and gipsies had told her, that she should be a lady. "Alas! for poor William," she said, in confidence to Starlinghurst; "how sadly he will take it to heart should I break with him! He is a good, worthy creature, but I cannot love him. You, Frederick, are not half so worthy as he (nay, you need not smile and shake your head), but I love you." What youthful heart is so cold but that it would inflame at words like these? The young squire had only contemplated a few weeks of dalliance, nothing more; and he was rapidly falling in love. Then another circumstance added fuel to the flame. Old Lancefield's health began to fail; a rival blacksmith started in the village with an improved method of shoeing horses, and obtained the bulk of the farmers' business. The old man's hoarded guineas proved to be a delusion; he had spent all his savings in buying a parcel of useless book-reading (so village gossip discovered), and it was rumoured that he would have to apply for parish relief. "You, Frederick," whispered Harriet, "know everybody, and can do anything. Could you not get poor William a place in London? He would earn more money to support his father, and," she added, "I could break it to him more easily." "It" is a small word, but it purported a

great deal in this instance. "It" meant the transfer of her heart from one man to another. So William went to London, and wrote cheerful, hopeful letters home. But old Petworth grumbled at the correspondence. "He's not fit for thee, lass; I'll not have the gold I've scraped together spent in feeding that old silly scholar of a blacksmith." So the correspondence languished, and finally ceased. Before it had ceased, matters had reached a crisis. The young squire and Harriet had eloped in a post-chaise. He was so fond of her, and so proud of her, that he meant to marry her. Unluckily, that accursed pride of family intervened to prevent him. His father wrote a brief stern letter, warning him that, if he married the girl, he would disown him for ever. He was entirely at his father's mercy. The estate was unentailed, and his father could if he chose leave all his property to found a hospital. He could not endure the prospect of sordid, pinching poverty, so Harriet and he agreed to defer the marriage ceremony for the present. His father might die, or fifty things might happen. They went to France, and lived a careless, merry life. The Duke of Orleans proved the kindest friend possible. He was not particular about the precise status of his lady-acquaintances. He lent the young couple money, and, in short, did everything he could to make things pleasant. At this point we will for

the present quit the history of Harriet Petworth; we will leap over ten years, returning to 1795, and to the dandified gentleman, who is reclining on the sofa with a green shade covering his left eye.

It would be quite a mistake to fancy that Mr. Starlinghurst was inspired with a dreadful feeling of animosity against Arthur Taswell. The state of affairs was simply this. His father was so hale and vigorous, so unconscionably bent on remaining above ground, that the young man saw no prospect of obtaining money to pay his debts, and enable him to live comfortably but by marrying. Floretta Anerley was just the girl to suit him. She was pretty and vivacious; her father was not a mere City money-spinner, misplacing his v's and w's, but a baronet of ancient creation, a gentleman, a man of the world, and a sympathiser with gay young men. Taswell stood in his path; but he would have removed him by other and milder methods, excepting for the gross insults he had received at his hands under Sir Goodwin's roof. Even when he followed the young lawyer along the street, he regarded him as a low-born, spiritless fellow, whom the mere threat of a challenge would probably frighten away from Bedford-square for ever. Thus, as we have shown, both the young men formed a false estimate of each other's courage, and both were rudely undeceived. As for Starlinghurst's share in promoting Taswell's arrest, he had some

excuse to offer. The discovery of the seditious documents was purely accidental, and had he not raised his voice in favour of his detention, there were plenty of other persons present who were ready to do so. Besides, it must be recollected that Starlinghurst had been educated in the strictest principles of Toryism, and, in spite of his loose morality, and impatience of personal control, he had retained his political prepossessions in favour of loyalty. Consequently he regarded Taswell's supposed views not merely as detestable, but as something utterly low, vulgar, and unworthy of a gentleman.

His feelings, as he reclined on the sofa, were of a mixed character. He could not help being pleased that his rival was put out of the way for the present, and that, moreover, his seditious folly would bar his admission for the future to Sir Goodwin's family; but he was somewhat ashamed of his own part in the transaction. When an Englishman gives another man a severe drubbing in a fair stand-up fight, he is apt to feel kindly-disposed towards his defeated antagonist. Such were Starlinghurst's sentiments on the present occasion. "Poor devil!" he muttered. "I thrashed him soundly, and he deserved all he got; but I ought to have stopped there. I had no business to hound on the mob against him."

Several days elapsed, and the environs of Starlinghurst's eye had passed through all the orthodox

gradations of blue, green, and yellow, until the colour faded into the normal paleness of the rest of his complexion. He was once more presentable in society, and took advantage of his recovered good looks to repair to St. James's Park, followed by Purkess, bearing a pair of skates; for the bitter hard winter, if it deepened and aggravated the misery of the ill-fed, ill-clothed poor, opened up a new source of pleasure for the rich and idle. Not even the card-tables and private gambling saloons were proof against the attractions of Jack Frost. They were comparatively deserted; while the Parks, especially from the hours of six to nine P.M., were crowded. As soon as they arrived on the margin of the lake—which at that time was straight and formal, like a piece cut out of a canal, far inferior in beauty to the island-studded ornamental water it has since become—as soon as they reached this spot, Mr. Purkess held up his finger, and beckoned one of the numerous proprietors of chairs to approach. Having handed this functionary the skates, he folded his arms, and took up his position with calm dignity behind his master. The scene before him was striking and picturesque. Even in the daytime there are few more exhilarating sights than a sheet of ice crowded with skaters. The variety of graceful posture, the rapidity of motion, the bright dresses of the ladies, the broad comic effect of tumbles and collisions, make up a very

interesting and lively picture. Add to this the mysterious charm lent by the darkness of night, the gay and variegated costume of seventy years ago, the glare of hundreds of blazing torches, the martial sounds of music, the shrill cries of the fruit and cake vendors, the bursts of laughter, the shouts of surprise, the continuous hum of conversation; let us conceive a mental picture of this, and set it in a background of grim, weird-looking trees, with their leafless boughs powdered with snow, and we obtain an effect such as few other sights can produce. Behind, the deceptive gloom of night enabled one to imagine a silent, unpeopled North American forest; before, the apparently preternatural swiftness of the moving figures flying about with torches in their hands, recalled such a witches' frolic as Tam O'Shanter beheld with shuddering curiosity.

The man of fashion had just risen from his chair, and was about to limp across the few yards of crisp frozen turf which divided his skates from their natural element, when a hand clad in a fur mitten was laid lightly on his shoulder, and a musical voice, somewhat foreign in its accent, whispered in his ear, "Mr. Starlinghurst, can I have a few words with you?"

The dandy reseated himself in his chair with commendable prudence, feeling that a skater on *terra firma* is as ungraceful in his movements as a swan on a turnpike road, and then wheeled round

for the purpose of seeing the person who spoke to him.

The figure was that of a member of the softer sex, but she was so closely veiled, and so well wrapped up, that both her face and the contour of her person were concealed from view.

"Your voice appears familiar to me, madam," said Starlinghurst; "may I have the pleasure of asking your name?"

"Da Silva."

"Oh, is it you, Donna Serafina?" said the dandy, gaily. "But why attack me in this melodramatic fashion?"

"Because, sir, I could not gain admittance to your lodging."

"Hollo, Purkess, how is this?" asked Starlinghurst.

Mr. Purkess inclined his head, and placed his hand significantly over his left eye.

"Oh! I understand. Donna, I was suffering from the effects of a slight accident, and our worthy friend here would not permit me to be visible until my beauty was fully restored. And how do you like our English climate this winter, fair lady?"

"It is truly shocking. In spite of these warm wrappings I am perished with cold."

"I should think so. And now for this conversation."

"Surely, Mr. Starlinghurst, you would not keep

me freezing here, with the glass below zero? I simply watched you from your house in order to have a word with you—to make an appointment, in short."

"How truly tigerish and Asiatic she is in her arrangements!" muttered the dandy. "Well, Donna, shall you be afraid to trust yourself in my poor lodgings? You will have for protectors my friend Purkess and the housekeeper, who is old and ugly enough to watch the gardens of the Hesperides."

"When shall I come?"

"One hour hence. Till then, allow me to warm my chilled blood."

And stepping carefully on to the ice, the dandy raised his left foot and shot gracefully away amid the crowd of skaters.

At the appointed time, Serafina da Silva, otherwise Mrs. Chigwood, and Mr. Starlinghurst were seated opposite each other. Now that her outer wrappings were removed, she appeared handsomely and becomingly dressed, and but for her tawny complexion would have been exceedingly attractive.

"What a pity she is black!" thought the dandy, as he examined her delicately-formed arm with the eye of a connoisseur. "She is like the Venus de Medici dipped in a tar-barrel." Indeed, the exceeding darkness of her skin was intensified by contrast with the light-coloured dress she wore,

and the elaborately-fitting straw-tinted gloves which, now that her fur mittens were removed, ornamented her taper fingers.

"Now, then, Donna," said Starlinghurst, leaning back in his chair, and crossing his legs, "having brought my circulation up to comfort-point, I will give you my best attention."

"Very well, sir; then I will begin. You wish to marry Miss Floretta Anerley?"

"Such is my humble aspiration."

"She loves you?"

"I scarcely know yet. I flatter myself there is a *tendresse* in my direction."

"Sir Goodwin approves of your attentions?"

"I trust so; in fact, I may say I think so."

"Miss Thrupp?"

"That guardian angel does me the honour of esteeming me as a young man of the highest principles."

"Then the path of love is smooth?"

"Smooth as a billiard-table, but for one thing."

"What is that?"

"Your mistress—companion—what shall I call her?"

"Mistress. I am only Mrs. Norland's poor faithful servant."

"She may act the part of Madame Veto."

"I don't understand."

"Merely an historical allusion to the late un-

fortunate Queen of France. In plain English, she may object."

"Mrs. Norland loves you?"

"Possibly she does."

"Nay, I know it. She has confided it to me."

"She is very obliging."

"Why do you not marry her?"

"For several reasons; among others, the danger of bigamy. If that dreadful Major's head had been in the cocked-hat which was picked up in the Ganges, it would be otherwise."

"Supposing I was to prove to you that Major Norland was dead?"

"I should be glad to hear it, for he was a worthless fellow."

"Supposing I was to prove to you that Major Norland was alive?"

Starlinghurst's eyes sparkled, and a flush of excitement passed over his pale face. The crafty Oriental noted the change.

"I should be pleased," he said, in a tone of languid indifference. "Provided always Sir Goodwin was ignorant of it. But you would have to admit Mrs. Norland to your confidence. Then she would withdraw her objection to my marriage with Floretta; nay, possibly she would marry Sir Goodwin, and I should obtain a vastly fine woman for a mother-in-law. Can you prove this fact, Serafina?"

"I shall not inform you, sir, at present."

"What a creature of mystery thou art! And whither does your own ambition point?"

"I abhor your detestable fogs and frosts. I wish to return to Calcutta."

"As a dependent?"

"No, sir," said Serafina, proudly; "as a lady with money enough to live handsomely in my native Bengal."

"Then further my interests, and I will further yours. I know Sir Goodwin, that amorous old baronet, will pay you a round sum the day he puts the wedding-ring on his charming Amanda's finger. I also shall reward you liberally when you prove to the satisfaction of myself and the said Amanda (who won't be particularly pleased to hear it) that her respectable Major has come back to life, cocked-hat and all."

"I understand," replied Serafina. "With your permission, sir, I will now withdraw."

"Fair countenances often hide evil dispositions," said Starlinghurst, after her departure, "but there goes a woman whose heart is as black as her face. Money is her god; her evangel, the Gospel according to St. Rupee. I should have fancied she would prefer keeping Mrs. Norland in her present position, as a woman whose fascinating manners and pretty face draw a large concourse of silly people to her house, where they lose their money at the

faro-table. But I suppose she would rather gain a large sum at one *grand coup*, take passage for the Indies, and marry some gentleman of her own creed and colour. As for Mrs. Norland, it would really be a charity to marry her to Sir Goodwin. She would stand as his wife in a far more respectable position than she does now, the handsome decoy to a fashionable gambling saloon. 'Tis true, ladies of high rank do the same thing, and think no shame of it; but then she is not a lady of high rank. What a strange constancy there is in woman's love! We men rove like butterflies from flower to flower; woman, like the bee, drains one cup of affection to the dregs. What a charming sentiment I have uttered! If I have not plagiarised it from the Minerva Press, I will repeat it to the first pretty woman I see. Not to Floretta. Oh no! She must believe in the profound depth of male attachment, indissoluble union of two hearts, and so on. Well, she is a fascinating little baggage, and will answer my purpose, at any rate, till my father drops off, which event will take place, I expect, about the year 1830. To return to the subject of woman's constancy. Confound Harriet —Mrs. Norland I mean—for being so enduringly faithful in her love. It was a case of necessity when Norland married her. He had the money, while I was cleaned out. But my darling and myself exchanged solemn vows that, if ever Nor-

land departed this life, I should take her to the altar, and make up for past neglect in that particular. Queer, foolish vow, wasn't it? Had I not been a fool, I should have married long ago, when they were in India. But here I am, a gay bachelor still, and she says she is patiently waiting for me. Hang it, we must bring Norland to life, and persuade her to take Sir Goodwin. Now then, I shall go and rattle the 'bones' for an hour or two. 'Purkess, a chair!'"

CHAPTER VII.

THE B. C.

As the chimes of St. Antholin's Church struck three-quarters past eight, Mr. Chigwood drained the contents of his glass, and rose from his comfortable seat by the fire with a groan of discontent. The house was quiet; Bildad sat on the opposite side of the hearth, nodding over the biography of one of England's worthies—namely, Dick Turpin; while good-natured Sam had gone to bed an hour earlier than usual, for the purpose of telling Plassey a wonderful story, the history of twelve brothers. His audience had gone to sleep at the seventh brother's adventures, so Sam had ceased abruptly, and was now snoring with considerable vigour.

Commending the stock and premises to the care of the elder apprentice, the hairdresser wrapped himself in an ample cloak, and quitted the house.

He directed his steps towards a narrow thoroughfare leading to the Thames, between St. Paul's Cathedral and the river, called Trig-lane. In this street there was situated a quiet, old-fashioned public-house, standing somewhat back from the roadway, built with a comfortable bow-window both on the ground and first floor. The windows were case-mented with small diamond-shaped panes; the entrance to the bar was down a flight of three steps; in short, the whole place looked like a road-side inn that had been dropped by accident into a vacant space in the heart of the city of London. The landlord of such an ancient-looking edifice should have been a bigoted old Tory, believing in roast beef, shoe-buckles, and full-bottomed wigs; abhorring French frogs, wooden shoes, and kick-shaws. But such was not the case. A smartly painted sign creaked above the portal, bearing the image of a military gentleman in blue and buff uniform. This was the effigy of Mr. George Washington, then President of the United States of America; and the landlord of the house (which was entitled the New York Tavern) was, as may be supposed, a Friend of Liberty. Though an Englishman, he had fought in the American war—so 'twas whispered—on the Continental side, and had been rewarded by some obscure post under Congress; but having got his accounts into a state of perplexity, he thought it advisable to quit the

land of freedom and return to his native isle. He was a quiet, cautious fellow, who had imbibed a good deal of the Yankee shrewdness; he never disclosed his opinions unless he was pretty sure of his company, and he prided himself on his ability to scent out a Government spy on the shortest notice.

"John T. Barling, licensed to retail Wine, Tobacco, and British Spirits," was painted in small characters over the door, which Mr. Chigwood pushed open. He descended the steps into a narrow passage, at the end of which the bar was situated, while on one side appeared the taproom for the commonalty, on the other the parlour for the bettermost folks who patronised the house.

"Good evenin' tu ye, Mr. Chigwood," exclaimed Mrs. Barling, a stout buxom lady of middle age, with a strong Devonshire sing-song accent, overlaid with the nasal drawl of Massachusetts. "Guess you'll find my old man in the parlour."

The hairdresser entered the parlour accordingly, where were seated the landlord, who was a tall, thin, shrewd-looking personage of forty-five, and several other customers, amicably discussing the news of the day. Some were members of the B. C., some were ignorant of its existence.

"What's the bill of fare for this evening?" asked Mr. Chigwood.

"Wal, sir," replied the landlord, "we shall commence with the National Anthem, in course; then a gentleman will read a paper on the advantages of Wet Docks."

"What society is this?" asked an elderly man, with some interest.

"Merely a little private club of gentlemen who wish to improve one another's minds."

"An excellent idea; I should like to join them."

"Wal, sir, they're kinder shy and timid. They don't care to increase the number of members. At present they're just like a snug little family party. Time's up, Mr. Chigwood," said the landlord, looking at his watch.

The hairdresser and several other persons rose, and quitting the parlour, were escorted by Mr. Barling along a passage which led behind the bar to a flight of back-stairs. Having ascended to the second story, they were stopped at a half-open door by a man who whispered something to each person in succession, and tendered his ear to receive their murmured reply. "Who was on London-bridge?" he asked. The answer was, "The Great Mogul." The club-room was a tolerably large apartment, but with a low, sloping roof, which rendered the atmosphere, notwithstanding a blazing fire, somewhat close and disagreeable before the proceedings terminated. In a few minutes

about thirty persons had assembled, and the proceedings began. Mr. Barling was called to the chair, and immediately proposed that they should commence by singing the National Anthem. The words ran thus:

Whence all this dire debate,
Why shakes the British state,
From shore to shore?
Oppression's iron hand
Too long hath scourged the land,
By ministerial brand,
God help the poor!

Burdens enormous lie
On the community,
Hard to endure,
And the poor workman's pay
By tax is ta'en away
From his poor family;
God help the poor!

Great God! the poor befriend,
Let thy right arm defend,
Thy strength is sure;
Aid us our rights to gain,
And in our land maintain
Freedom for Englishmen;
God help the poor!*

"Ay, my friends," exclaimed Walter Loveridge, starting to his feet, "God help the poor indeed! I have this day seen a sorry sight. Thousands of honest labouring men begging for bread in Ratcliff-highway. The Thames is covered with ice, the boats cannot approach the ships, their sole means

* Written by Daniel Bamford, a Lancashire weaver, 1793.

of subsistence is cut off. That is one picture. Behold another. Let us go in fancy to the Court-end of the town. What shall we see? Men and women clothed in soft raiment, provided with every luxury that art can devise to stimulate their palled appetites, to excite their jaded senses to fresh dissipation, drinking the choicest of wines, eating the richest of meats, gambling, intriguing, cheating, slandering, lying; not content with the superfluity they already possess, but clamouring for more; ready to crawl through the mire to kiss the minister's shoe, in order that they may pension off their sons and daughters, and nephews and nieces, on the starving people of England! Read this, my friends," he continued, taking a piece of chalk from his pocket, and writing on the mantelpiece:

"NATIONAL DEBT INCREASES £75 A MINUTE, SLEEPING AND WAKING.

"And now read this:

"HOW CAN THE POOR MAN LIVE?

"*Prices.*	"*Wages.*
Meat, 10d. to 1s. per lb.	Carpenters, 12s. a week.
Small beer, 2d. per qt.	Shoemakers, 10s. ,,
Bread, 3s. per peck loaf.	Bakers, 9s. ,,
	Gardeners, 8s. ,,
	Husbandmen, 7s. ,,

"These are sober facts, which you all know

to be true. How, I ask you, can a family-man support life with such wages and prices? He cannot live; but he can die—by the most terrible of all deaths, slow starvation. And now what is the remedy for this state of things? We can petition Parliament, forsooth. Will that august body listen to us, when a majority of the House of Commons are chosen by a few electors, who are bought and sold like a flock of sheep? Yes, my friends, two hundred and ninety-four members are elected by less than fifteen thousand electors. One hundred and sixty-two members are elected by private patronage without any electors at all. The fee-simple of the borough of Gatton has lately been put up for sale, with the right of electing two members for ever, without the embarrassment of voters. The puffing auctioneer truly calls it 'The only infallible source of titles, honours, and fortunes in this happy country. On this halcyon sea,' he says, 'if any gentleman who has made his fortune in either of the Indies chooses to embark, he may repose in perfect quiet. No hurricanes to dread, no tempestuous passions to allay, no tormenting claims of insolent electors to evade, no tinkers' wives to kiss, but his mind at ease and his conscience clear; with *this elegant contingency* in his pocket, the honours of the State await his plucking, and with its emoluments his purse will overflow.' Is it before the bar of this corrupt oli-

garchy, my friends, that we shall bring our starving wives and babes, and humbly kneeling, sue for a morsel of bread? They will give us a stone; nay, they will drive us forth with their hireling bayonets. What is the remedy, then? Force. Let us repel violence by violence. Let us not ask for our rights, but take them. The Scripture tells us, 'The violent take the kingdom of Heaven by force.' We will use that method to secure our liberties. Let us but once arouse the free spirit of England, and half a million pikes will rise at our bidding!"

This speech was received with mingled applause and disapprobation; for even in that small assemblage there were two divisions: a party of the Mountain, and a party of the Plain. The majority, with the instinctive regard which Englishmen feel for the law, deprecated violence, and wished to accomplish their aim — which was definite and reasonable—by moral force alone. They desired Parliamentary Reform, and a reduction of State burdens. But the fanatical minority wanted to overturn the Government, and establish a Republic, based on French principles, in its place. These men were prepared to go to any lengths, and were too often hounded on and encouraged to speak sedition by the presence of spies, who found their way everywhere. In spite of Mr. Barling's acuteness, in spite of secret pass-words, there were spies present in this very meeting, and on the following morning an ex-

aggerated report of the proceedings would be laid before the astute Sir John Scott, the Attorney-General. But that cautious Tory was loth to prosecute except on the clearest evidence. The Government had signally failed in their attempts to punish Hardy, Thelwall, and Horne Tooke, in the preceding November, and they resolved not to strike another blow until they were certain of their aim.

Mr. Chigwood rose: "Fellow-citizens," he said, "I agree with much that the honourable gentleman——"

He was interrupted by cries of "Order, order!"

"Stranger," said the chairman, gravely, "we've no gentlefolks here. I calculate we're all sons of Adam."

"Citizen Chigwood," exclaimed Loveridge, "rubs shoulders with persons of quality. But I advise him to lay aside his courtly manners with his barber's apron."

"Sir," said the hairdresser, "you insult me."

"A fine! a fine!" exclaimed a member. "He has used a monarchical form of address."

"Glasses round," muttered a red-faced man.

"I shall be merciful," said Mr. Barling. "I fine Citizen Chigwood the sum of one shilling."

The unlucky hairdresser paid the money, which the chairman rang with tradesmanlike precaution on the desk. Mr. Chigwood then proceeded with his address.

"I wish to call the attention of the meeting to a private matter——"

"I say, Citizen Chairman," interrupted the red-faced man, "this chap looks like giving us a long spell; let's have a drop o' drink."

Mr. Barling put it solemnly to the meeting: "Friends, shall we liquor up, as they say in New York?"

The sense of the meeting was decidedly in favour of refreshment. It presently appeared, in the shape of a gallon of gin and a number of glasses.

"Now then," said the red-faced man, "I'll give you a toast: George Guelph, the German hog-butcher, who sells his Hanoverian subjects for thirty pound a head."

The toast was drunk with only moderate approbation.

"If that's too peppery, I'll give you a song," said the red-faced man. And clearing his throat, he burst into the following parody of a popular air of the day:

"Go, George, we can't endure you,
We don't know how to cure you,
  So let a better fill your shoes.
Are the people for no use meant,
But merely your amusement,
  To tax and torture as you choose?
  There's Grenvilles and Dundases,
  With other titled asses,
  A rotten, useless pack,
  Who're heap'd upon our back:
  Go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go,
  Nor dare again your face to show."

"One more toast," cried Loveridge. "The B. C.—the Bastile Club, and may it flourish until England's freedom is accomplished!"

When the applause had subsided, Mr. Chigwood rose once more.

"Fellow-citizens, I wish to speak of a private matter. A Friend of Liberty—though not a member of this association—has been arrested, and is now in prison."

"Name?" cried several voices.

"Arthur Taswell."

"He is a wealthy man," said the chairman, "and will easily bilk the law."

"His offence?" asked Loveridge.

"Seditious papers——"

"Heh!" exclaimed the chairman, sternly. "Beware! Another fine——"

"Falsely so called, I was about to say, had you not interrupted me," said the unlucky hairdresser. "The title of one of them—'The National Razor.'"

Loveridge started, turned pale, and rose.

"My friends," he said, "this is my doing. I entrusted those papers to his care. We must not suffer an innocent man——"

"Hang him!" cried the red-faced fellow. "Let him sweat for it. The rich for the poor. The poor have sweated centuries for the rich."

"He is not rich," retorted Chigwood. "He is a beggar. His uncle, Tobias Taswell, has squandered the whole of his property."

"That alters the case," said the chairman. "Fellow-citizens, I propose a vote of sympathy with this persecuted patriot."

"Much good that will do him," answered the barber, courageously. "Oh! I see what you Republicans are. Great cry and little wool."

Loud cries of "Turn out the traitor," resounded through the room. Mr. Chigwood presently found himself impelled by several muscular arms towards the door.

"Stop!" exclaimed Loveridge, in a loud voice, which instantly commanded attention. "Stop! Are you not ashamed, Citizen Barling," he said, turning to the chairman, "to suffer a worthy member of our club to be expelled thus?"

"The citizen insulted us," said Mr. Barling.

"Insulted you! You deserved insult. What good would a barren expression of sympathy do to a man rotting in jail? But this is my own especial business, and I will have no meddling on your part. Citizen Chigwood, let us leave together. I wish to speak with you."

As soon as they reached the street, Loveridge pointed his finger to the house, and murmured, "A set of feeble fools. Let any man hold a stick for the belwether to leap over, and they will all follow. Are you of a stouter fibre?" he added, turning to the hairdresser.

"I fear not," said Mr. Chigwood. "I am what the Methodists would call a weak vessel, fonder of

hearing my own voice than of levelling a pike against our oppressors."

"I like you none the worse for your sincerity. Better to be a lamb, and look like one, than to wear a lion's skin, and then betray your asinine descent by a senseless bray. Oh! if I had but ten true men, brave and disinterested, who were ready to sacrifice their personal ease and comfort for the common good! But alas! I can find none such, and I almost despair of the cause. To return to Citizen Taswell. That young man must not suffer for my fault, if fault it be. He must be rescued from prison."

"How, Citizen Loveridge?"

"By force, by fraud, or by fair and open petition, if possible. We will talk further on this matter. Meanwhile, do what you can for him among your Court friends; I know you have such."

CHAPTER VIII.

A HAUNT OF FASHION.

A MERRY party of ladies and gentlemen sat round an oval table covered with green cloth, and provided with a rim about an inch high. They were not discussing politics, nor charitably planning how to relieve the frozen-out poor; they were not even talking scandal. Yet they contrived to kill a good deal of useless time, and obtained a fair share of languid excitement by risking their guineas at the fashionable game of faro. The banker was a lady, who displayed a pair of lovely arms and delicately-shaped hands as she turned up the cards. Her pretty head was supported by a slender nicely-rounded neck upon a pair of elegant shoulders. But her face was invisible, hidden behind an envious blue domino. One of her watchful *croupiers*, who sat opposite, was not so disguised, although

she wore a mask of Nature's own devising; namely, a black skin, which we have encountered once or twice already. Donna Serafina was attired in Oriental costume. She wore a short jacket of crimson cloth, well studded with mock jewellery, yellow satin Turkish trousers, fastened at the waist by a green girdle, while her head was ornamented with a scarlet fez cap. Mr. Chigwood having once beheld his spouse in this gorgeous array, remarked that she only wanted an asp to look like Cleopatra, and added, in an under tone, that if she had an asp, and that reptile did what he ought to do, he (Mr. Chigwood) should not break his heart.

"What a vast moral and intellectual improvement has taken place in the world since seventy years ago!" says some active earnest-minded lady of the present era, who goes through more hard work during the London season than a charwoman in the sixteen working hours of her day. She has letters to write, charitable committees to attend, schools to inspect, friends to call upon, new books to read and talk of, parties to give where her fascinations will soften the scruples of her husband's political opponents. But our poor grandmothers in 1795, dear madam, were not so distractingly busy. They found a good deal of idle time hanging on their hands. There was no Mudie's library at that day; no shoal of new novels. Mr. Walter Scott was an obscure advocate, hobbling about the Parliament-

close of Edinburgh, probably himself unaware of all the Marmions and Waverleys that were hatching in his brain. Mrs. Radcliffe existed, it is true, and was highly popular, but a mind wrought up to sensation pitch by her romances, naturally wanted relief. And faro answered this purpose admirably well. It was a game which anybody could understand; nothing more, in fact, than a slightly complicated blind-hookey. You selected a card from the complete suit of thirteen, which you held in your hand, and staked what you pleased on it, subject to the approval of the bank. The banker then turned up a complete pack of cards, laying them alternately to his right hand and to his left. He won the stakes on all cards of equal value turned upon the right, and lost the stakes on all cards of equal value turned upon the left. If, however, a similar card was successively turned up on the right hand and on the left, it was called a *doublet*, and the *punters* lost half their stakes. This constituted the banker's profit.

We will not stop to speak of *paix*, *double paix*, *parolets*, and *cocking cards*. Are not all these things written in Hoyle? This banker's profit ran up to a very pretty figure at the end of a week or two, and paid for all Mrs. Norland's and Serafina's dresses (Cleopatra did the mantua-making herself). It appeased the butcher, sent the baker away smiling, and kept the general herd of fashionable

tradespeople in good humour. But this, you will say, was a shocking disreputable life—to keep, and be kept by, a gambling-table. Our only answer is, that in 1795 plenty of ladies of rank did so, without Mrs. Norland's excuse, which was that of necessity. The play was perfectly fair and honest; there were no tragical, harrowing scenes, no tearing off of wigs, and putting pistols into mouths; everything was carried on in a quiet, well-bred, easy manner, and people swept the guineas into their own pockets, or saw them swept away by that remorseless Bengalee *croupier* with the most perfect *sang froid*.

And why did Mrs. Norland hide herself behind that blue domino when all the rest of the company showed their faces? The truth is, she was ashamed of her position, and fancied, like the ostrich with his head in the bush, that with her features disguised she was altogether concealed from view. Everybody knew perfectly well who she was, and she knew that they did so; still she drew comfort from this bit of cerulean velvet. The probability is that a happy and contented heart did not beat beneath the kerchief which covered that fair bosom. As the servant entered the room and announced two visitors, her hand trembled visibly. Without speaking, she handed the pack of cards to Serafina, and beckoned to her to take her place.

"Nay, Sir Goodwin, come in," said Starling-

hurst to the old Baronet, who appeared unwilling to enter. "We shall not altogether corrupt your city morality. Madam," he continued, bowing profoundly to Mrs. Norland, "your most humble servant; Donna Serafina," with a nod of familiarity, "your most obedient."

"Well, my dear boy," replied Sir Goodwin, "I will for a few minutes. But the fact is we grave citizens are so unaccustomed to this sort of thing, that I am quite taken aback. Dear, dear, 'tis more than twenty years since I handled a card. My poor wife looked upon them as the library of Satan."

"Sir Goodwin Anerley, will you not risk a groat?" said Serafina, with a fascinating smile which showed a glittering row of white teeth. "We thankfully receive the smallest contributions."

"I'll try a chance or two," replied the Baronet, carelessly depositing a guinea on one of the suits of cards which was placed before him.

The elderly gentleman was evidently thinking of something else, and while the cards were being turned up, the following reflections passed through his mind:

"I have just received a double surprise, which has quite staggered me. It arises from my having lived for the last score of years so entirely sequestered from the fashionable world. In the first place, I

was not aware that my lovely Amanda kept a faro-table; in the second place, I did not know that Starlinghurst had the honour of her acquaintance. He is of course ignorant of my love affair; I trust not a soul knows that excepting Chigwood and his wife. So Master Frederick, bent upon showing his future father-in-law a specimen of life *à la mode*, has unwittingly introduced me into the society of the woman whom I adore. Upon my conscience, though," added the Baronet, frowning, and screwing up his keen little eyes, "they appear very intimate together. Faith, as thick as inkle-weavers. Under pretence of pouring out a glass of claret at the sideboard, they are standing apart from the company, they whisper together, and she presses his hand with a convulsive energy which——"

"*Quinze et le va!*" exclaimed Serafina. "Alas! Sir Goodwin," she added, with a malicious gleam of triumph, "your good luck has deserted you. Such bold play in a beginner should have commanded good fortune. See, you have won the first and second *parolet*, you have now cocked your card a third time and lost; your original stake was two guineas. I am under the unhappy necessity of troubling you for thirty guineas."

The Baronet started, and opened his cunning little eyes wider than he had done for many a day. "Madam!" he began. He then apparently re-

strained himself by a strong effort, and said quietly, "I have not so much money about me. But my note of hand will answer your purpose, will it not?"

Serafina handed the Baronet pen, ink, and paper, whereupon he scribbled an I. O. U. for thirty guineas, which he handed to her.

Now for the explanation of this unfortunate venture. Sir Goodwin had been a practised card-player in his youth, but years of abstinence had taken away all his taste for the amusement. His thoughts were far from the faro-table; they were directed to Starlinghurst and Amanda. He was stung with the intense jealousy peculiar to elderly admirers, on seeing their evident intimacy. While thus agitated, his eyes had mechanically followed the other players, and his fingers had unconsciously imitated their movements. He had seen them turn up the corner of a card (the signal for doubling), and had, automaton-like, done the same. Twice he had won, the third time he had lost. There was nothing in the world Sir Goodwin dreaded so much as ridicule, so he kept his unintentional adventure to himself, and paid the money with a secret groan.

"My second initiation into the world of fashion threatens to prove expensive," he muttered. "My youthful crop of wild oats cost me dear enough. Perhaps that is not Amanda after all! Yet it

must be. She evidently wears a mask, as mistress of the house. Besides, I recognise that swan-like neck, those fair golden tresses."

"Sir Goodwin," said Starlinghurst, approaching the table, "how does the game please you?"

"Faith, little enough. I have lost three hogsheads of sugar."

"Then come hither, and be introduced to the fascinating Mrs. Norland. Her sweetness will, I am sure, atone for the West India deficiency. Permit me, fair lady," began Starlinghurst, assuming a mock heroic tone, "to introduce to your worthy notice the puissant knight—I beg his pardon—baronet, Sir Goodwin Anerley, whose ancestors fought at Flodden Field, but who has now converted his battle-axe into a counting-house ruler, wherewith he wields the destinies of the island of Barbadoes."

"Pardon me, Sir Goodwin," said the lady in the domino, with a gracious inclination of her head, "that I did not address you sooner. A friend of Mr. Starlinghurst's is welcome here. Not merely to play cards; I am not thinking of that. In a short time," she added, turning to consult the elegant French clock which ornamented the mantelpiece, "our friends will have dispersed, and then if you are willing to devote half an hour to the humble company of myself and my companion,

Donna Serafina, we will do our best to entertain you."

"Madam, I am highly honoured," replied Sir Goodwin, with a swiftly palpitating heart. "I will await your pleasure."

The company shortly after began to break up, and the Baronet found himself summoned by Serafina to follow her into another apartment.

"Well, Mrs. Chigwood," he began, with some asperity, "you've bled me pretty freely this evening!"

"For Heaven's sake, Sir Goodwin, don't call me by that repulsive name! In this house I am Donna Serafina da Silva. Regarding your loss, it was simply the fortune of the cards. You might have won thirty guineas."

"I wish I had, for this is an extravagant beginning. And now, how comes this young spark so intimate here?"

"Mr. Starlinghurst?"

"Yes; he is, you know, to marry my eldest daughter. I cannot have him making love to his future mother-in-law."

"You need not fear that. It is simply a friendship of very ancient date."

"I don't admire these ancient friendships. There is an affectionate interest in Mrs. Norland's manner towards him which——"

"Nonsense, Sir Goodwin. She loves you, and you only. This is only your second interview. You cannot expect her to open her whole heart at once. Hush! here she comes."

Mrs. Norland entered the room. She had laid aside her domino, and displayed all the graces of her person, which were of no common order. Her figure was tall and elegant, but her chief attraction lay in the expression of her face. Her eyes were large, blue, and soft; her nose was high and delicate; her mouth wide but beautifully formed; her lips somewhat compressed when in repose, but easily expanding into an enchanting smile. Her eyebrows were remarkably arched, giving to her countenance an air of piquant innocent surprise. Her hair was dressed in a fashion which had become partially obsolete, being brushed back from her forehead over a high cushion, and surmounted by a rustic hat coquettishly placed on one side, and ornamented with a wreath of roses. The golden hue of her hair was easily discernible through the slight *soupçon* of powder which brightened her complexion without disfiguring its beautiful tint. Serafina's tawny colour was an admirable foil to her loveliness. Her arms seemed like alabaster beside those copper-coloured braceleted portions of Mrs. Chigwood's anatomy. Finally, had any of those polite gentlemen who composed the old French court entered the room, they would have

declared that one fair victim at least had escaped the frightful massacres of September, and would have bowed with profound reverence before the restored Princess de Lamballe.

Such a lovely rose had sprung from the thorny stem of old Dick Petworth, late schoolmaster of Fessenden, Kent. The daughter of a common soldier, who had taken in his old age to the horn-book and copy-slip, was an object of envy to many a lady of title, who would willingly have sacrificed half her rank and fortune for the villager's face and beauty.

"Is not jealousy a sign of true love, madam?" demanded Serafina. "Sir Goodwin is frightfully, hideously jealous of his intended son-in-law."

"Of Frederick—of Mr. Starlinghurst?" said Mrs. Norland, with a melancholy smile. "Why so, Sir Goodwin?"

"Your own words, madam, this moment uttered, give me grounds for such a sensation. You unwittingly called him by his Christian name. When," sighed the old Baronet, "may I hope to be favoured with such a proof of affection?"

"He is an old friend, Sir Goodwin. Pardon me, Serafina, I wish to speak with Sir Goodwin for a few minutes alone."

The companion rose somewhat unwillingly, with a scowl on her dark visage, and quitted the room.

She had scarcely closed the door, when Sir

Goodwin, sinking upon one knee and placing his hand upon his heart after the most approved fashion of George the Second's reign, exclaimed, "Sweetest Amanda, this is the first opportunity I have had of declaring my passion; permit me to offer to you a heart unalloyed——"

"Rise, Sir Goodwin, to your feet," said Mrs. Norland, scarcely repressing a smile as she extended a hand for the charitable purpose of restoring the gouty gentleman to an upright position. The elderly lover repudiated assistance. It is true that he seized her hand, but it was for the purpose of covering it with kisses. When the lady had forcibly withdrawn it, he managed to struggle to his feet by the aid of a chair, in which he seated himself considerably out of breath.

"Cruel beauty!" sighed Sir Goodwin, panting with exertion and vexation combined.

"Pray be silent, sir, and hear what I have to say. I did not dismiss my companion to listen to your protestations of love."

"Why then," said the Baronet, who had by this time recovered his usual composure—"why then did you write such encouraging letters?"

Mrs. Norland was silent, and turning away, covered her face with her hands.

"Sir Goodwin," she said at length, standing before the baronet; "nay, do not trouble yourself

to rise; at your age men have a right to remain seated——"

"Madam!"

"Forgive me if I have hurt your feelings. But it is as a father with grown-up daughters of your own that I wish to speak to you. You have seen me here, presiding at the faro-table, surrounded by gay company; do you fancy I am content with such a life?"

"I hope not. As the wife of a rich merchant in Bedford-square, you would have a position of respectability which——"

"I care not for such advantages, and yet almost any lot would be preferable to that which I endure at present. I am neither wife nor widow; I am dependent on my wits for my livelihood; I am in the power of a clever unscrupulous woman whom I have taken into my confidence. It was she, Sir Goodwin, who urged me to encourage your admiring glances; who dictated those high-flown letters; who, in short, to gratify her own cupidity, would induce me to marry you when my heart is irrevocably given to another."

"To Starlinghurst, I presume, madam," exclaimed Sir Goodwin. "Why, I have promised him to my daughter. Good God, madam! would you have him turn Turk, and marry two people at once?"

"No, Sir Goodwin, but I would have him repair the injury he did me ten years ago (the greatest injury a woman can suffer) by marrying me now. You are astonished, Sir Goodwin, and no wonder. You thought, doubtless, that Major Norland, who died in India, was my real husband. In the eyes of the law he is, or was. In the eyes of the Creator, who looks to motives rather than outward acts, Frederick Starlinghurst is my husband, although no priest ever blessed our union."

"May I ask, madam, why he deserted you?"

"He did not desert me, but his father refused to allow us to marry. More than that, he refused to allow his son a shilling until he cast me off. What can a youth who has been brought up in habits of luxury and extravagance do to support himself? He was terrified at the miserable prospect before him. Just then we became acquainted with Major Norland. He admired me, and I foolishly encouraged his admiration. He told me he was madly in love with me. I believed him. I consulted Frederick. He advised marriage. He said, 'Major Norland will place you in a respectable position, which, so long as my father lives, I can never do. But if ever your husband dies, I solemnly vow that I will wed you. No other woman shall tempt me, though I wait for years!' Well, Sir Goodwin, eight years have passed away, my unfortunate hus-

band perished in the Ganges, as I firmly believe, and I come to claim my promise."

"Does Starlinghurst love you?"

"Oh, Sir Goodwin, I love him with such intensity, that a small portion of love on his part will be sufficient. Besides, it is not merely love that I wish to gratify. I desire him to make me an honourable woman. For his sake I gave up a far worthier man than himself—a man who has since become a broken-spirited and desperate outlaw."

"You have had many admirers, Mrs. Norland?"

"Can I help it? Is it not this ill-starred beauty which causes it? Possessing beauty, I cannot resist doing my best to increase its attractions. It is woman's nature to do so. But I have often thought how far happier I should have been had that hideous disease which has spoilt so many others' loveliness visited me and disfigured my good looks for ever. As a girl, I used to pray earnestly, night and morning, that I might be preserved from the small-pox. I neglected to pray that I might be saved from sin; and see, my prayers have been answered. At twenty-eight years of age I retain my beauty in perfection, but my innocence has perished for ever!"

"Then, Mrs. Norland," said Sir Goodwin, "are my entreaties all in vain?"

"Your entreaties! It is of you that I must beg.

I entreat you not to permit my Frederick to marry your daughter. Sir Goodwin, will you hear me? He is my Frederick. He belongs to me and to no one else. Your daughter has a worthy, honourable lover, I understand; let her marry him."

"Pshaw! a penniless barrister. That can never be."

"Why are you so greedy of wealth, Sir Goodwin? You have plenty. Bestow some of it on this young man."

"Madam," exclaimed Sir Goodwin, thoroughly angry with disappointment, "permit me to regulate my own affairs. The person you recommend is not only penniless, but in prison on a charge of sedition. Madam, I wish you farewell; I have been thoroughly deceived and mistaken in you." And the baffled merchant hobbled from the room.

After the lapse of a few minutes, Serafina entered the apartment. Her black eyes sparkled like a cat's, and her teeth were firmly set.

"So, Harriet," she began.

"Serafina, I will not permit such liberties. Please to remember that you are my servant."

"Your servant indeed, madam. Pray who has been the real mistress of this house? Who has governed the domestics, arranged with the tradespeople, averted the creditors, managed the faro-table, but me? You, you, Harriet! I only used you as a pretty doll to attract persons to the house

who were too silly to be allured in any other way. But this is what I came to say. You have dared to drive Sir Goodwin from the house, to tell him that his daughter shall not marry this popinjay admirer of yours——"

"Silence, Serafina, or——"

"Or what, pretty Harriet? Don't I know that you are as helpless as a babe without me? Now, you shall not be a naughty, obstinate girl any longer; you shall do exactly what I please. Shall I tell my sweet poppet something?"

"I am prepared to listen quietly to any further degree of insolence."

"Thank you, Mistress Pert. You had a husband once, who was drowned in the sacred river Ganges."

"Cruel woman, how can you speak so lightly of such a horrible event?"

"Why, you never cared for him, Harriet, you know you did not. While he lived, you dreaded and detested him; and when he died, the only thing you regretted was——"

"What?"

"That you were not sure he *was* dead. Am I not right?"

"Why do you recal all these sad memories, Serafina?"

"For a reason. Supposing I could prove to you that Major Norland was dead!" The wily black

woman narrowly observed her unfortunate mistress's countenance; but Mrs. Norland betrayed no outward emotion.

"Anything," she replied, calmly, "would be preferable to the painful suspense I have endured for more than two years past."

"Supposing I could prove to you that Major Norland is alive now?"

Mrs. Norland started, and her face grew pale.

"I would sooner know that he was dead, murdered by the hill-robbers of Bengal, than that he was alive; because, if alive, he must be a disgraced man, a thief, who, to conceal his own villany, falsely represented himself dead."

"A pretty character for the Major to hear of himself! If you don't take care, I shall tell him the next time I see him."

"Serafina!" exclaimed Mrs. Norland, seizing her companion's arm convulsively, "tell me, I pray you, is there any truth in this?"

"Be a nice, pretty-behaved girl; don't give way to the tantrums, and you shall see in a day or two. Good night."

"Good night," replied Mrs. Norland, mechanically. As soon as she was alone she rose suddenly from her chair, and endeavoured to soothe her agitation by pacing rapidly up and down the room.

"Serafina," she said, "has constantly presumed on her position, and taken liberties with me, but

she has never before displayed such open insolence and malignity. Alas! she knows what influence a clever woman may gain during seven years of almost unlimited confidence. Then I must not forget her good qualities, how assiduously she nursed me through that fever, how carefully she tended me in the long, tedious voyage home. And during that voyage I needed comfort. For I left India in broken health, not a widow in popular estimation, but the wife of a runaway thief, who, after years of cold neglect and actual ill-usage, had terminated his career by basely robbing his employers. But for Sir John Halstead's kindness I could never have returned home. He said, 'The best thing you can do, my dear child, is to return quietly to your friends.' Alas! I did not dare tell him that the few friends I had in England would regard me as an outcast; that my father had quitted Fessenden suddenly, and disappeared no one knew whithe. So Serafina persuaded me that my attractions would soon gain me a husband, for in those days she insisted that I was really a widow. Sir John's introductions brought company to the house, cards were introduced, and, little by little, I find myself the keeper of a gambling saloon! What a degradation, compared to the happy, innocent life at Fessenden, before I knew Frederick, when I was at work from sunrise to sunset, and when William Lancefield would

drop in and question my father about the heights of Abraham. Alas, alas! I can scarcely believe that was only eleven years ago! And now I have contrived to injure or offend everybody connected with me! William Lancefield has become a sullen desperado, Sir Goodwin is deeply hurt and annoyed, Serafina is mad with rage and disappointment. Frederick Starlinghurst repents his solemn promise, and would rejoice if I were to accept the Baronet, in order that he may be free to marry his daughter. Then, what if Serafina's threat be something more than empty words, and Major Norland is really living!"

CHAPTER IX.

PRISON VISITORS.

"WELL, mother, I don't know as you could do better than crumpets of a cold night," said the turnkey, taking a large bite as he toasted his feet on the hob, "except you'd ha' got muffins. There's a flabbiness about a crumpet that takes off the hedge of enjyment."

"You ain't done badly, father; it's your second plateful," replied the turnkey's wife.

The worthy couple were seated in a cozy little apartment comfortably furnished. Everything was as clean as a new pin. The six rush-bottomed chairs, the clock in the mahogany case, and the oaken drawers, were all bright with beeswax and rubbing. Four portraits ornamented the walls—Dr. Dodd, author of the "Beauties of Shakespeare;"

the Rev. Mr. Hackman, who shot Miss Reay; Dr. Van Butchell, of Mount-street, Grosvenor-square, as he appeared in Hyde Park, riding his celebrated pony painted with alternate blue and yellow stripes; and, lastly, Mr. Charles James Fox, leader of the Opposition. The turnkey was specially interested in all these pictures; the two first gentlemen had suffered professionally by the hands of Jack Ketch, the quack-doctor had cured his wife, and Mr. Fox's butler (when Mr. F. came into power) was going to get him a better situation.

"La! how I do pity that poor young man," sighed the wife.

"Nonsense," growled her husband; "he's lodged like a king; he's got a chair, and a table, and a bit of fire in the grate, and if a prisoner wants more than that he's unreasonable."

"He wants his freedom."

"In course he do, and the more fool he not to take it. This is the second time he's been remanded, and a fortnight he's been under my lock. The Government don't want to persecute *him*, they want the name and address of the real offender. And he won't give it."

"What a noble fellow!"

"Noble nincompoop! I tell yer, mother, if I was——"

"There's a knock at the door, father."

The turnkey got up with a discontented grunt,

shook himself, and proceeded to parley with the person or persons outside.

"Who are ye?"

"James Chigwood, and a friend."

"Oh! its the little hairdresser that that good-hearted young lady sends here," remarked Mrs. Turnkey. "Let him in, father."

"Good evening, sir," said Mr. Chigwood, as he entered, with bland politeness. "Sharp night for noses and toes. Good evening, Mrs. Wrench; you're pretty snug here, ma'am."

"Who's this?" quoth the turnkey, indicating with a jerk of his thumb a tall shabbily dressed personage, with a shock head of red hair.

"Ai be a friend o' his, fro' the coontra," answered the man, in a strong north-country accent. "Ai've knawn him from a bairn."

"He means a friend of the prisoner's," explained Mr. Chigwood. "I suppose it's all right, we can see him," he added, slipping something into Mr. Wrench's hand.

"Well, it's after hours," remarked the turnkey, "but if so be as he's come out of the country, why——"

Without saying more, he marshalled the visitors through a passage, unlocking two massive doors on the way, and then introduced them to a somewhat comfortless, barely-furnished room, which, however, but for the bars at the window, bore no resem-

blance to a dungeon. Arthur Taswell was seated at a small rickety table, writing. As soon as the turnkey had quitted the apartment, Mr. Chigwood observed:

"I am pleased to see, Mr. Taswell, that the money has produced a good effect, and that you are in more comfortable quarters than that miserable cell."

"May I ask who is my benefactor?"

"I am forbidden to tell. Here is a person who wishes to see you."

The tall man advanced towards the fire. Taswell scanned his features, but was apparently unable to recognise him. Presently, without speaking, the tall man removed his shock wig.

"Walter Loveridge!" exclaimed Taswell.

"The same," replied his visitor; "you may be surprised to see me thus disguised. But the other evening at our club, on your arrest being mentioned, I announced that I was the author of those documents which led to your apprehension. We have since discovered that there were traitors present in the room. They have set Bow-street runners on my track, so that I am in hiding. And now you will naturally ask why I have suffered you, an innocent man, to be punished for my offence? My simple answer is," said the fanatic, "that I cannot be spared. The cause needs my services. Nay, more, it needs yours also. You must be set at liberty."

"How do you propose to effect my release?" asked Taswell.

"It could be done by open violence, if necessary; it might be done by bribing this venal wretch who holds the key of your prison. But we propose another course. There are persons who, for various reasons, desire your restoration to the outer world."

"I am surprised to hear that," said the young man. "Arthur Taswell, the heir to twenty thousand pounds, would have had many a sympathising visitor to his cell, many a voice uplifted to release him from custody. Arthur Taswell, a ruined man, with scarcely a shilling in his possession, may apparently lie in prison till he is taken out to the convict-ship, or even to the scaffold."

"Do not speak so gloomily, Mr. Taswell," said Chigwood; "you need not fear either fate. Your friends are bestirring themselves, and you will shortly be set at liberty."

"But, who are these friends?"

"I will tell you of one of these friends," said Loveridge. "Do you remember on the day of your arrest how I related to you the sad story of my early disappointment?"

"I do, I do; you said you had never seen her since——"

"Will the further recital weary you?"

"Weary me! will the sound of a friendly human voice weary a poor lonely captive? If the turnkey would but suffer it, I could listen contentedly to

your narrative until daybreak to-morrow. But, possibly, you would rather defer it until we are alone."

"Not at all; you need not fear Citizen Chigwood, he is a tried friend. Somewhat too fond of moral force, but we shall teach him better things by-and-by, when we put the pike in his fist."

The hairdresser smiled deprecatingly, as Loveridge began to speak. "I told you that six months ago, I had encountered Harriet Petworth. You asked me if I had seen a wretched, degraded creature; I laughed sarcastically, and broke off abruptly in my story. Now you shall hear what I really saw. I had but just returned from France, where, in common with Tom Paine, and many other pure patriots, I had been imprisoned. The ninth of Thermidor saved me from the guillotine."

"Strange!" interposed Taswell, "that after having suffered at the hands of these sanguinary monsters, you should still worship that blood-stained Moloch, the image of French liberty."

"Those who imprisoned me were but the blind tools of others. The accursed guineas sown broadcast in Paris by our heaven-born Minister, Pitt, the vapourings of the Duke of Brunswick, the intrigues of the emigrant nobles at Coblentz, were the true cause of all these horrors. These were the men who bribed Danton, who suborned the miserable Père Duchêsne, who even tried to sap the

integrity of the incorruptible Robespierre himself!"

Taswell shrugged his shoulders. "There is no arguing with a fanatic," thought he. "Continue your story, Mr. Loveridge."

"Mister again! Ah! Arthur Taswell, you are a Monarchist, I fear, at heart. But no matter. I had landed in England penniless. Even my clothing was so threadbare that no blacksmith would admit me to his forge. I was wandering in Hyde Park, chewing the cud of bitter reflection, and thinking how the empty-pated, chattering occupants of those gilded carriages would look with their heads in the stern vice of the guillotine, when, gazing before me, I saw an open vehicle, in which lolled a haughty beauty alone. I compared our respective conditions. Her face was fair, delicate, and well nourished; mine was weather-beaten, haggard, and famine-struck; her dress was modish and gay; mine was only fit to adorn a scarecrow. She was borne onwards in a luxurious carriage, attended by liveried servants; I limped along with my naked flesh showing through my shoes. Such a sight was calculated to produce envious feelings in the bosom of a starving, homeless, despairing man; but what think you were my sensations on discovering that this proud dame was no other than my once affianced bride, stolen from me ten years before by a cunning aristocratic villain? Madness filled my brain; I rushed forward, seized the horses' heads,

and cried 'Stop!' to the coachman. His curled wig almost quitted his head in his terror, for he verily believed me a daylight footpad. I then went to the door of the carriage and said: 'Harriet Petworth, do you know me? I am William Lancefield.' She screamed and turned pale with terror. Her lips moved, but she uttered no words. Then, placing her delicately-gloved hand in her reticule (ah! it was a pretty hand, and many a time have these lips kissed it), she drew out—what think you? Her purse, and threw me a guinea. The coachman had by this time recovered his presence of mind, and whipped his horses. I uttered a yell of rage like that of a disappointed wild beast, and taking up the guinea, cast it back to the carriage. It missed its aim, and fell harmlessly on the grass. I watched the carriage pass out through the gates until it disappeared. The rest of my story is degrading, but true. Shall I go on?"

"By all means."

"I told you I was starving. Except a dry crust a labourer had charitably bestowed upon me, I had not tasted food that day. I regarded the guinea as it lay at my feet. 'Accursed piece of gold!' I said, 'thou possessest a mighty power. In that small circle lie food, shelter, warmth—shall I take it up? No. It may be the wages of her sin. I will leave it for the first poor mortal who comes by. He at least will use it without a guilty knowledge.' I walked away for a

hundred yards or more, feeling like a Spartan youth who had done a noble action. But just then, the demon of hunger returned upon me with redoubled violence. I said, 'I will return and deposit the guinea at any rate in a place of safety. Here it may be trodden into the mire, and lost to every one.' I went back, but I had missed the spot, and I could not find it. I hunted for hours, till the dusk of the summer evening came on as I searched and searched in vain; the greediness of a miser tingled in my fingers; I vowed I would recover that lost bit of gold. At last I discerned it; I clutched it in my hand, and, rushing off to a tavern, ate and drank till nature was satisfied. Was not this degradation?"

"'Tis hard to say," replied Taswell, evading the question. "And is this lady one of my friends?"

"For reasons of her own, into which I care not to inquire, she wishes to set you at liberty. It is enough for me that our wishes point in the same direction. But since I last saw you, my heart has been somewhat softened towards this woman. I find that she has lived a miserable life; that her first lover, after promising her marriage, basely sold her to another man, who wedded her, it is true, but treated her for years with cruelty and neglect, that she knows not whether he is dead or living, and that, finally, she is nearly as friendless as I am,

and, in spite of her gay clothes and fine house, not much more wealthy."

"Her first lover, you say, was Frederick Starlinghurst?"

"Ay, the gay gentleman who is about to marry Sir Goodwin's eldest daughter."

Taswell's face flushed, he clenched his fist. "The villain!" he exclaimed. "Would that I were outside these bars! I would do my best to hinder his wedding."

"Wait patiently but a few days, Arthur Taswell, and your deliverance shall come."

"I think, my country cousin from Lancashire," remarked Mr. Chigwood, with a significant glance at Loveridge, "we had better be moving. My worthy friend with the bunch of keys may otherwise grow impatient."

"You will take this letter?" asked Taswell, hastily folding a sheet of paper, and handing it to the hairdresser. "It is for Miss Floretta. Has she shown any sympathy for my adversity, Mr. Chigwood?"

"Little, as I can learn, Mr. Taswell. When dressing the young ladies' hair the other evening, her talk was all concerning wedding favours and orange-blossoms. Miss Thrupp said that the finger of Providence was plainly visible, obscuring your uncle's usual sagacity, for the purpose of punishing your politics. Miss Lucy sighed and said, 'Alas, for poor Arthur in prison!'"

"One drop of consolation," exclaimed Taswell, "in a cup of hateful, selfish ingratitude!"

"Come," said Loveridge, with a gesture of impatience, "let us be going. Were you planning how to overthrow the Government, and how to save your bleeding country, I would listen to you. But I am weary of all this lover's nonsense about a woman. Cut her adrift and get another sweetheart. You won't lose by the exchange. They are all alike—all equally false and deceitful." And resuming his north-country accent with his shock wig, he knocked on the door-panel, as a signal to the turnkey, saying to Chigwood, "Coom, lad, beest ready?"

"Well, gentlemen, how do you find your friend?" asked Mr. Wrench, as he swung open the door.

"Eh! lad," answered Loveridge, "aw think he's peart enough. He wants nobbut liberty."

"Ha! ha, good again!" laughed Mr. Wrench. "So that's your notion, Master Country-cousin, eh?"

"Now, what is there to prevent our overpowering you?" demanded Mr. Chigwood. "I merely put the question out of curiosity."

"Overpowering of me," laughed the turnkey, twisting his keys, but prudently keeping his back against the wall. "Nothin' whatever. You might knock my brains out with this here bunch of metal, but then you'd have to pass three doors, and over my wife's body. She's a determined woman, and

keeps a pair of duelling pistols in the corner-cupboard."

"Dunno prattle a pack o' farce, Chigwood, but coom out," said Loveridge. The prisoner and his visitors briefly bade each other farewell, and the turnkey conducted the latter along the passage till they arrived at his parlour door.

On entering the room they found a personage seated by the fire whom they had not seen before. He was a stout, square-built man, with a bull-neck, keen eyes, and closely-shaven face. He was muffled in an ample cloak, and appeared to be intent on imbibing as much warmth as he could from the fire.

Messieurs Chigwood and Loveridge regarded the new comer with an air of suspicion. The turnkey observed their emotion. "On'y a friend of mine," he remarked, "come to talk over old times. Mr. Chigwood," he added, "you're a hairdresser, ain't you?"

"I am, sir," replied the barber briskly; "can I do anything for you in my line?"

"Why yes. I've got a wig here in this here cupboard, which——There, you can take it out yourself."

As Mr. Chigwood was peering into the darkness of the cupboard, he suddenly received a vigorous thrust from behind. In another moment the door was closed upon him, a key was turned, and he found himself in total obscurity. At the same

instant the bull-necked man rose, and throwing off his cloak, thereby disclosing the red facings of the Bow-street runners' uniform, produced a pistol, which he deliberately cocked and presented at Loveridge's head.

"In the king's name," he exclaimed, "Walter Loveridge, otherwise William Lancefield, I arrest you on a charge of sedition!"

Before Loveridge could recover his surprise, the turnkey had seized his arms from behind, and in a few seconds a pair of handcuffs were attached to his wrists, and his ancles brought together by a leg-iron.

"Let me out, let me out," cried the barber. "Mr. Wrench, dear Mr. Wrench, I assure you I am innocent."

"Any warrant against *him?*" said the turnkey to the bull-necked man.

"Him," replied the other with great contempt. "No, he ain't worth bothering about."

The turnkey unlocked the door, and released Mr. Chigwood, whose face was white with terror.

"Oh! Mr. Wrench," he exclaimed, clasping his hands. "How you have deceived us!"

"More than you did me," growled the turnkey in reply. "What, you call yourself a perookyear, and disguise a dark-complexioned man with a wig like that! Why, the take-in was as plain as the Monimint, warn't it, Mr. Yapp?"

"Ah!" said that gentleman; "disgraceful. Now, Mr. Barber, we don't want you, so you can go. We know all about you: James Chigwood, keeps a couple of 'prentices, a couple of bears, and three black boys in St. Antholin's-court; does shavin', curlin', and hair-dressin', runs arrands for baronets, and young ladies as wants to hear from their sweethearts in chokey; member of the Bastille Club, et sitra, et sitra."

"Good Heavens!" cried the hairdresser, "how did you learn all this?"

"By keeping my eyes and ears open, and using my tongue now and then. My advice to you is, mind your business, and steer clear of politics. Good night to ye."

And Mr. Yapp opened the door, and pushed Mr. Chigwood out into the street.

"Lord," thought the unfortunate barber, "if old Gattrell gets scent of this, I'm a ruined man. He'll sell me up, bears and all, without mercy."

"May I inquire," asked Loveridge, "the exact nature of the charge against me?"

"You'll hear all about that to-morrow, my friend, afore the magistrates. You'll most likely have the honour of paying a visit to the High Constable of the Tower."

"We shall lodge you here to-night," said Mr. Wrench, "and if you've got such a thing as a

crown about you, you can have a hot supper, and enjoy yourself."

"No, sir," said Loveridge, sternly; "I neither wish to pamper my body, nor to increase your ill-gotten gains——"

"All right," replied the turnkey, coolly. "Then you may take the straw bed with stone-jug fare, and be d—d to ye for a stingy son of a——"

"It is easy to insult a man whose hands and feet are fettered," remarked Loveridge. "But I suppose you are only carrying out the instructions of your superiors. Lead the way to my cell if you please——"

"Well, if you ain't a crack-brained fool!" said the turnkey. "Most men would dilly-dally every minute they could, just for the sake of the warm fire. It's tolerably chilly down below, ain't it, Mr. Yapp?"

"Ah!" replied Mr. Yapp, "the rats won't trouble you to-night, they're all snug a-bed." After this remark, the turnkey lighted his lantern, and conducted the prisoner to his dismal cell.

CHAPTER X.

THE ASSES OF MOUNT GERIZIM.

THE peaceful regularity and monotonous tranquillity which had hitherto distinguished Sir Goodwin Anerley's house in Bedford-square, had been of late much interrupted. The sisterly bond of union between Floretta and Lucy was almost severed; the latter felt grieved and scandalised at the easy unconcerned manner in which her sister had transferred her affections from her long-tried and faithful lover, to a new and unknown person; while Floretta was angrily jealous at the intense interest felt by Lucy for Arthur Taswell, since he had fallen into adversity. Sir Goodwin himself, from being an even-tempered, good-humoured man, had become snappish and irritable to a degree which he had never displayed before, during his worst fits of gout; he had grown mysterious and

secretive, receiving letters and holding private interviews with various unknown personages at all kinds of irregular hours. Then Mr. Starlinghurst, who now viewed himself in the light of an accepted lover, was perpetually dropping in. And he seldom came empty handed. One day he would bring a magnificent bouquet from Covent Garden Market (a greater rarity then than now), then an admission card for Lady A.'s rout—where all the *émigré* nobility in London would be gathered together—then a ticket to see the grand balloon at the Pantheon in Oxford-street, shaped like a fish, and drawn by four live eagles; another day, an exact copy of a new dress worn by Madame Cabarus, at the *Bals à la Victime*, in Paris. Such a visitor should have been highly popular, but no one excepting Floretta liked him. Sir Goodwin detested him, for the simple reason that his existence as a bachelor was the chief obstacle to his own success with Mrs. Norland; but he was prepared to like him well enough as soon as he was married to Floretta. Lucy felt for him a calm settled dislike, not unmingled with contempt, and her cold indifferent manner towards him had often caused high words to arise between the sisters. Miss Thrupp regarded him as a rather frivolous young man; but allowed that his levity of conduct in private affairs was compensated by the soundness of his political principles. But the easy un-

punctuality of his visits, made her despair of ever fulfilling the duties laid down in that weekly table which hung in her bed-chamber; just as the young ladies had settled down to "Jerusalem Delivered," he would come begging them to go and hear Handel's music in Westminster Abbey, or he disturbed them from their German exercises by announcing that Boone, the weather prophet, had fixed this as the last day of the great frost, and that if they wished to see the ice crashing against the piers of London-bridge, it would be their final opportunity.

On one of these occasions, Mr. Starlinghurst proposed a rural walk. The sun was shining warmly and brightly (it was the month of February), although the frost still continued. The ladies accepted his proposal, and presently took their departure. To reach the fields in the present day from Bedford-square, would require a steady brisk walk of more than an hour, and even then we should find ourselves among trim, suburban villas, and not in the real country of hedgerows and corn-fields. But, in 1795, the dimensions of London were more reasonable. Green pasture-land still existed between Bedford-square and the New-road; the Duke of Bedford's property, now represented by Russell and its tributary squares, was unbuilt upon; while, north of the New-road, the country stretched almost without interruption

to Highgate and Hampstead. Somers Town, which has since become a second St. Giles's, was then in course of building, and was regarded as a pleasant suburban retreat, while Cantler's Town, or Kentish Town, was reckoned a country village on the Great North-road.

As Floretta had expressed a desire to see the process of milking cows, the party directed their steps towards Hammond's dairy farm, a celebrated establishment in those days, situated in the locality now occupied by the goods-depôt of the North-Western Railway in Camden Town. Let us picture the spot, now crowded with an endless series of trucks and carriages, resounding with the screams of numberless locomotive engines, and blackened with the dust of legions of coal-waggons; let us picture this spot, as it appeared seventy years ago. We should have seen an old-fashioned, red-brick farm-house, with its yard littered with manure, and tenanted by a host of pigs, poultry, and ducks, in the true old-fashioned style; while the sides of the yard (which was unusually extensive) were bounded by two long ranges of tile or thatch-covered cowsheds.

The short winter day was drawing to a close as the party arrived at the farm. Miss Thrupp paused to take breath, and to admire the view over London.

"See, my dear girls," she observed. "How

beautifully clear the air is here, and how the smoke rests in a tawny yellow line on the southern horizon. The frost is not likely to break as yet, in spite of your weather-prophet, Mr. Starlinghurst."

"No," replied the dandy, rubbing his hands. "It promises well for lasting."

"You seem pleased at the prospect."

"Why, it is a serious affair for me. I have several heavy bets depending on the grand skating match that is to come off on the Serpentine to-morrow. I should be ready to hang myself, just now, if the wind got round to south-west."

"But think of the poor, Mr. Starlinghurst," said Lucy. "What relief a thaw would bring to them!"

"'Pon my honour, Miss Lucy, I never thought about the poor. All I can say is, it's very selfish and unreasonable of them to wish for a thaw to spoil our sport."

"You do not consider the miseries they suffer during the severe weather. Many persons are without blankets to cover themselves, and without fire to warm their rooms. We go out well-clothed and well-fed, and enjoy the frost by force of contrast."

"Sweet Miss Lucy," said Starlinghurst, taking her hand, "I must kiss that pretty little fur mitten, in return for your generous sentiments."

"Lucy has become a perfect Jacobin of late," said Floretta, sharply, not altogether relishing that her lover should bestow his gallantry on her sister. "She had better go about as a female apostle of freedom, and preach to the people from Jean Jacques Rousseau."

"What!" exclaimed Miss Thrupp, who had been earnestly watching the changing colour of the sun's disc, as he sank into the sharply-defined line of fog which bounded the south-western horizon, "what do you say, Floretta?"

"We are merely considering the possibility," simpered the dandy, "of Miss Lucy attiring herself as the Goddess of Liberty, with a flowing classical robe, *bonnet rouge*, and pike, for the purpose of indoctrinating the *canaille*."

"Nonsense, Mr. Starlinghurst," observed Miss Thrupp. "What has Lucy been saying?"

"They sneered at me," interposed Lucy, indignantly, "because I expressed sympathy with the poor."

"It is a dangerous sentiment in these times. Look at poor Louis XVI. He sympathised with the poor, and they murdered him. His predecessors never did a good turn for anybody, and they died peaceably in their beds. The severity of the season teaches the poor self-denial. They should be less improvident. You remember the fable of the butterfly and the ant."

"Oh! Miss Thrupp!" exclaimed Lucy, "you are not so hard as you profess to be. Have you not devoted two hours every day to making flannel——?"

"No more of this, child," said the governess, blushing. "Come and look at the prospect, before the sun goes down."

"Oh! I see the British Museum!" exclaimed Floretta.

"And I observe that hideous new prison in Coldbath-fields," said Starlinghurst.

"Alas! poor Arthur," sighed Lucy.

"Perhaps he is confined there," remarked Miss Thrupp. "He is a misguided young man, and I fear a traitor to his king and country. Lucy, you must not think of him."

"Do you note that?" whispered Floretta to her lover. "She adores him."

"'Tis woman's glorious privilege," replied the dandy, half in earnest, half sneeringly, "to love the poor, and to succour the wretched."

Floretta frowned, and bit her lip. "Where are the cows?" she exclaimed, to divert her thoughts. "I see no cows. I thought we should see hundreds of cows, attended by their Welsh milkmaidens, coming in slowly from the green pasture."

"The cows will be happy to follow such a picturesque occupation in the summer-time, my dear Floretta," replied Starlinghurst; "at present, your green pastures are as hard and barren as a deal

board. 'The milky mothers of the herd' are all safely foddered down in their sheds."

"We will go thither, and see them milked," said Miss Thrupp.

The party entered one of the sheds. After admiring whole battalions of cows, which were kept as neat and clean as if they had been in Holland, their attention was attracted by a placard which was posted on one of the partitions between the stalls. Starlinghurst read it aloud for the amusement of the others:

"'Wonderful Discovery! Genuine Medicinal Asses' Milk from the Holy Land! Sheikh Beni-Hassan has, after incurring innumerable risks and vast expenses, imported a score of those beautiful animals, the asses of Mount Gerizim, from Palestine. They are fed on herbs peculiar to their native country, which imparts that extraordinary curative quality to their milk, for which it has so long been celebrated. Two of the asses are to be seen at Mr. Hammond's Dairy Farm, St. Pancras. The remainder are at Finchley, where several acres of ground have been sown with the plants required for their nutriment. Admission: Gentlefolks, Sixpence; Tradesmen, and Children, Threepence each. The milk supplied in bottles, sealed with Sheikh Beni-Hassan's seal, at one shilling per quart!'

"Delightful!" said Starlinghurst. "I wonder

what complaints are to be cured by this extraordinary beverage. Affections of the heart, think you, dearest?" he said, gently pressing Floretta's arm.

"It's done my mistress a wonderful deal of good, sir," said a voice from behind. The dandy turned, and beheld a stout old gentleman with a red nose—in fact, Mr. Gattrell.

"Indeed," quoth Starlinghurst; "we are dying to hear the particulars."

"Well, sir, and so you shall. You see, she's been suffering for a long while from a sort of inward weakness, and seeing this remedy paragraphed in the *Public Advertiser*, I ordered half a dozen bottles. We thought the milk alone would sit cold upon the stomach, so she takes it in the best Jamaica rum."

"A capital idea! And have you visited this Eastern potentate, the Sheikh?"

"No, sir. I've come up to day o' purpose. I'm an idle man, a retired tradesman, so I like to see anything that's going on in the way of a curosity."

"Shall we go and see this 'curosity,' Miss Thrupp?" asked the dandy.

"No, Mr. Starlinghurst," replied Miss Thrupp, with severity. "It appears to be a very childish affair. These donkeys are probably precisely like English donkeys."

Mr. Gattrell seemed aggrieved at the imputa-

tion that, at his mature age, he took an interest in infantine matters. He hastened to give an explanation.

"I do it to divert my mind, madam, for I've had a deal of trouble lately. When I retired from business, I set up a man in my shop, supplied him with goods and capital to do the thing in a tip-top style. And what do you think I discover now?"

"I have no notion," said Miss Thrupp.

"Why, I've discovered that he's a regular bad fellow, a revolutionist, a member of a secret society called the Bastille Club. More than that, I've run my eye secretly over his stock, and it ain't worth ten pound, let alone those two confounded bears."

"Bears!" exclaimed Miss Thrupp; "surely you are speaking of Mr. Chigwood, our hairdresser?"

"Lord! madam, are you his customers?"

"Sir Goodwin Anerley, my employer, is."

"Dear, dear," cried the old gentleman. "Sir Goodwin! who's a true-blue loyalist! oh! James Chigwood, James Chigwood! there's four good profitable heads gone from you for ever!"

"How did you make this shocking discovery?" asked the governess.

"In this way, madam. Chigwood went to visit a political prisoner, a young gentleman whom I've

known from an infant, and never expected to see disgracing his father's name this way. I've dressed his parents' heads for years; I've curled that boy for Christmas and New Year's parties, and now see what he's come to! He's in prison on a charge of sedition, his uncle's run through all his property, and there he is, in a dungeon with a cold stone floor, and not a shilling to bless himself with."

Lucy turned pale. "You are speaking of Mr. Taswell?" she said.

"I am, Miss. More shame of him to fly like this in the face of his king and country. Well, madam, Chigwood goes to visit him. No wonder, for 'birds of a feather flock together.' He takes with him a desperate character, a man I once turned by the shoulders out of Chigwood's shop for talking high treason. The Government was hunting after this man, so Chigwood takes him into the prison in disguise. But, lawks, what a disguise! It makes me wild to think of it. Why, a child of five year old that had once set eyes on that man, would have knowed him after Chigwood's dressing up. Heaven forbid I should abet treason, but if he'd ha' come to me, I'd have altered him so that the Attorney-General, and all the runners in Bow-street, wouldn't have known him! What's the consequence of Chigwood's disgraceful bungling? Why, this man walked right into the lion's den, and was took immediate."

"You seem to regret his capture," observed Starlinghurst.

"No I don't, young gentleman; I'm delighted to hear of any Jacobin being in custody. It's the honour of the profession I feel for. Why, after that, Chigwood isn't fit to dress a Guy Fawkes's head for the fifth of November. Where have I had the honour of seeing you before, sir?—your face is familiar to me—wern't it in Featherstone-buildings?"

Starlinghurst coloured, and winked significantly at Mr. Gattrell. "Possibly you have," he observed, coolly. "And what is the name of this desperate revolutionist?"

"Walter Loveridge, otherwise William Lancefield."

"Why do you start, Frederick?" asked Floretta, as she leant on his arm.

"A sudden emotion of regret. This man is, I believe, the son of a blacksmith in my native village. May I inquire your name?" added Starlinghurst, addressing the old barber.

"Adam Gattrell, at your service, sir, late of St. Antholin's-court, hairdresser; now of Bunhill-row, St. Luke's, independent," said the retired tradesman, raising his hat. "Then you won't pay a visit to the Jerusalem ponies, sir?"

"Not to-day, thank you, Mr. Gattrell," replied Miss Thrupp, graciously.

"Then I must, madam, if only to divert my mind.

Besides, I want to make sure my mistress gets the genuine article. There's a deal of roguery about."

And Mr. Gattrell bowed and retired. The others returned slowly homeward; they conversed but little on the way, for they were all preoccupied with their own thoughts. The name of Lancefield recalled many unpleasant memories to Starlinghurst's mind, and he rejoiced that a man who cherished bitter feelings of vengeance against himself, was in safe custody. Floretta, who was of a jealous, exacting disposition, had not forgotten his sudden emotion at the name. She was shrewd enough to doubt whether her lover's explanation contained the full truth. Lucy trembled to think that the arrest of this man might still further compromise Arthur Taswell, and implicate him in desperate schemes hitherto unrevealed. Miss Thrupp's feelings were less personal and selfish than those of her three companions; as a loyalist and patriot she lamented the dreadful and increasing spread of sedition; moreover, she was sorry for young Taswell; now that he was in prison and in adversity, her heart warmed towards him, and she felt remorseful for the severe language she had used to him on the morning of his arrest.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gattrell knocked at a common stable-door which was decorated with a placard similar to the one we have already seen. He was

admitted by Beni-Hassan himself, and paid threepence (under the tradesman tariff) into that Oriental's willing palm. The Sheikh was dressed in a costume which partook of the peculiarities both of the East and the West. A turban of gaudy Manchester cotton was twisted round his head, while his body was clothed in a long dressing-gown, girdled at his waist; but his feet were shod with highlows, and a pair of soiled buckskin breeches peeped from beneath the skirts of his garments. His stature was short, his complexion was brown, and he wore a stubbly beard and moustache.

"These are the animals, eh!" said Mr. Gattrell, speaking at the top of his voice, as was his custom when parleying with foreigners.

"Iss," replied the Sheikh, pointing out two very handsome specimens of the Spanish breed of that useful creature which climate and ill-usage have so deteriorated in England.

"How many pints of milk do they give apiece?" shouted the hairdresser.

The Sheikh appeared disinclined to talk. He held up several dirty fingers by way of answer.

Mr. Gattrell went into the stall, and began patting and stroking one of the animals. Presently he proceeded to examine her udder. The lady of Mount Gerizim objected to this liberty; she winced, and kicked out smartly with her hind feet, catch-

ing the Sheikh, who was standing carelessly with his arms folded, and his back to the door, a pretty severe blow on the calf of his leg.

"D—n you for a skittish jade!" exclaimed the Oriental, facing about sharply, and stooping down to rub the injured part. "Ass not like touch, sare," he continued.

Mr. Gattrell's mouth opened with astonishment.

"Why, you're an Englishman!" he said.

"No, sare, me Syrian shepherd-man."

"Why, you spoke good English enough just now, when she let fly with her hind leg," persisted Mr. Gattrell. "I'll warrant, if I was to offer you five shillings, you could speak as well as I can."

The Oriental remained obstinately silent.

"Very well," continued the old gentleman. "As you please. I believe the whole thing is an imposture, and in future Mrs. Gattrell shall have her donkey's milk from some other establishment."

"Gattrell!" exclaimed the Syrian, "of St. Antholin's-court?"

"Yes, sir, the same. I thought you'd speak English presently. Where did you know me?"

"Oh, Mr. Gattrell," said the Syrian, plucking off his turban, "don't you know me? I'm your old 'prentice, Tom Waterlow!"

"Lord!" said the hairdresser, peering into the other's face. "And so I believe it is. But how came you so swarthy?"

"Walnut juice."

"And the beard?"

"Oh! that's nature."

"And what makes you dress up in this heathenish style?"

"Mr. Gattrell, sir, you shall hear all. You know I always had a leaning towards the stage."

"Ay! that I do. I remember catching you spouting Coriolanus in the back shop, in my best powdering-gown."

"Well, sir, I deserted our profession and took to the circus. I was a horse-rider, sir; not jumping through hoops and riding three horses abreast—I began too late in life for that sort of thing—but simple straightforward work, such as any groom or ostler could learn. However, I got a bad tumble, and hurt my loins, so was forced to give it up. Now I'm here, as you perceive, sir. The man that owns these (they come from Giberralter, and between you and me the other eighteen up at Finchley are all a flam), he gives me seven shilling a week to mind 'em, and I get what the company please besides. Now, I'll keep no secrets from you, Mr. Gattrell; the milk is real genuine milk, only flavoured with a little sage and marjoram to give it a sort of foreign taste."

"Water?"

"Well, he does use the pump-handle a little, otherwise it would be too rich for delicate stomachs.

Oh! Mr. G., sir, you don't suppose I like this sort of game. I wish to goodness I was back in the profession again, a flourishing a razor, or a pair of curling-tongs."

"Are you married?"

"Yes, as nice a little woman as ever you see. Three children, besides number four who arrived last night. She's up in the loft. I should be proud to show her, but under the circumstances of number four having made his appearance, had better defer it. It's a hard struggle, Mr. Gattrell, on seven shilling a week, and what the company pleases. They don't please often. They're apt to say 'it's a take in.'"

There was a knock at the stable-door. The Syrian shepherd paused abruptly in his narrative, readjusted his turban, and admitted three open-mouthed cockneys, who stared as if they expected to see a couple of live crocodiles.

"Poor Tom Waterlow!" murmured Mr. Gattrell, as he retired. "I've a monstrous great mind to get rid of Chigwood, bears and all, and put Tom in the shop. He's clever, and knows when a pair of tongs is hot enough; now, Chigwood don't, and what's the consequence? why, he's burnt his fingers!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

It was not to be wondered at that Mr. Gattrell desired to get a fresh tenant for his shop, for Chigwood's business had fallen off alarmingly, and the interest promised on Lady-day seemed unlikely to be ever paid. The discovery that the wily hairdresser was connected with a seditious society had alienated all the old-fashioned Tory customers, who patronised the shop for Mr. Gattrell's sake; aldermen and common-councillors had indignantly withdrawn their heads; a minor canon of St. Paul's had peremptorily demanded his account, and on paying it had placed in Mr. Chigwood's hands a sermon against speaking evil of dignities; while the landlord of the Light Horseman tavern, a public-house situated in St. Antholin's-court, and much frequented by volunteers, had

solemnly denounced the barber, in the full conclave of the parlour, as an emissary of the French Convention. By this last blow twenty heads fell (out of the hairdresser's books), and speedy ruin seemed impending. Not that Mr. Chigwood was without customers. On the contrary, the shop was fuller than ever. But they were what Mr. Gattrell emphatically called "the wrong sort." Dirty, shabbily-attired "Sons of Freedom" lounged about the premises, congratulating Chigwood on the warmth of his patriotism, shaking hands with him every five minutes, inciting him to deliver inflammatory speeches and administer Schiedam to the assembled company; and, finally, sitting down coolly in his easy-chair, got themselves shaved, cut, and curled on credit of the most elongated character. Caricatures of an anti-ministerialist nature began to line the walls of the shop, such as the "Barber's Revenge on Chancellor Pitt," "York, you're not wanted," &c.; in short, as an eloquent supporter of the Government at the Light Horseman had forcibly expressed himself, "Chigwood had torn off the mask, had displayed the cloven foot, and proved himself a regular out-and-outer."

At this gloomy epoch in the barber's affairs Bildad became master of the situation. He had a double hold over the unfortunate Mr. Chigwood. As a spy in the pay of the dreaded Gattrell, he

kept an eye on the stock, and could, if he chose, forbid any of it being surreptitiously sold at ruinous prices, for the purpose of raising ready money (a frequent device of his employer's); while, as a member of the Bastille Club, he was prepared to denounce any lukewarmness on the part of Chigwood towards his fellow-citizens. For instance, if the hairdresser had hesitated to afford professional assistance to any gentleman of shabby exterior, but undoubted patriotism, he would have been regarded as "suspect;" and, though the citizens could neither imprison nor guillotine him, they could play him many unpleasant tricks. So Bildad reigned supreme. He got up when he pleased, had his boots blacked by Sam (who was a parish apprentice), did as much work as he thought agreeable for his health, and came in at night when he chose. Yet there was no ill-feeling between himself and Chigwood; on the contrary, a bond of union existed between them. They were both fond of the children. Whatever other faults Bildad possessed (and he had his share), he was uniformly kind and attentive to that triplet of chocolate-coloured boys with whom Donna Serafina had endowed her husband.

"Yes," said a red-faced man (the same whom we encountered at the Bastille Club), as Mr. Chigwood wiped the lather from his chin, "me and Citizen Barling went to see him. That scoundrel

of a turnkey wouldn't let us in under a crown. We paid him, and he took us to the cell. I never see such a sight in my life. There was that poor feller, handcuffed and leg-ironed, setting on a dirty straw palliasse, with a jug of water and a brown George loaf alongside of him. It was just like the picter of John Bunyan in the Pilgrim's Progress. I was ready to split with rage, but I didn't say a word inside the prison for fear of getting locked up myself."

"Did you see the other—Taswell?"

"No, curse him! Loveridge is worth a million such as he. Besides, he's a rich man."

"He is not," remonstrated the barber. "I told you the other night that he was penniless."

"Well, he's been rich, and that's as bad. I hate all aristocrats. I wish they'd only one neck, or that this razor was as long as the City-road, and in my grip. But never mind that now. I says to the turnkey, as we were coming out, 'When's he going to be took to the Tower?' 'Ax no questions,' he answers, 'and you'll hear no lies.' 'You're civil,' I says. 'I'm obligated to be so by the rules of the prison,' he answers, with a grin. 'I should uncommonly like to know,' I says, 'when and how he'll go. Can I speak to you for a minute outside, in the street?' I says, making believe to feel for something in my pocket. That devil would sell his neck to Jack Ketch for one of Abraham New-

land's tokens; so out he comes. 'Now,' says I, looking very fierce, and putting my arms akimbo, 'Arn't you ashamed, Mr. Turnkey, to keep a fellow-creature huddled up like that on a heap of musty straw?' 'What?' he begins. 'Now listen to me,' I says; 'I'm acquainted with a true friend of the people's, and this affair shall reach his ears before you're twenty-four hours older—that's Mr. Charles James Fox.' Lord! he turned as white as a sheet. 'Do you know Mr. Fox?' he stammers. 'Intimately,' I says, which was a downright lie, for I never set eyes on him but once, at the Crown and Anchor meeting, 'and the first Jarvey I see shall drive me to his house. What's more, I know his butler, and I shall let *him* know what sort of a chap you'd be for a billet in the New Clerkenwell Prison.' Well, Citizen Chigwood, I never saw a man so afeard in my life; he promised that Loveridge should be put into a decent chamber, and his fetters took off, afore he was an hour older. 'That's not enough,' says I; 'I must know exactly how he'll be removed to the Tower; on that condition I shan't split on you to Citizen Fox, and you'll be well paid for your trouble.' His cunning eyes sparkled at these last words, and he says, 'Come, or send a trusty friend, three days hence, and you shall know all I do.'"

"How did you contrive to get such a hold over that villain?" demanded the hairdresser. "Con-

found him! I can still feel the grip of his knuckles in the nape of my neck, when he shoved me into the cupboard."

"Ha, ha!" replied the other, "as Mr. Yapp remarked to you on that occasion, by keeping my eyes and ears open. I heard that pig-headed Tory of a landlord of yours remark in this very shop, when he was talking of Taswell's imprisonment, that the turnkey bragged about Charley Fox's butler, and when I saw the picter of that right honourable gentleman hanging up in the jailer's parlour, I recollected the affair, and made use of it accordingly. Now, Bildad, you've been a listening to what I've been a saying, han't you?"

"I have, citizen."

"Well, turn it over in your head. You're a sharp fellow. Devise a plan for getting Walter Loveridge out of prison, and when I'm president of the British National Convention you shall be my private secretary."

And the red-faced patriot left the shop.

"Thank ye for nothing," sneered Bildad, as soon as he had departed. "If I wait till he's attained that elewation, I must wait till the thirtieth of February. That game won't suit me, eh, Citizen Chigwood?"

The hairdresser pondered for a few minutes. "Bear it in mind, Bildad," he said at length. "It may bring you in a round sum of money."

There was a knock at the private door. Bildad answered it, and took a note from a small boy.

"What a shop this is for billy-duckses!" he remarked. "Here's another, master."

"From Serafina," murmured Mr. Chigwood, as he opened the letter. "Wants to see me immediately. She must be badly off for something; so am I. Money I must have, and I won't leave York-street under a five-pound note."

He presently put on his hat and coat, and proceeded to his wife's abode. Ringing humbly at the kitchen bell, he was ushered by the housemaid into Serafina's presence. That worthy lady received him with even more than her usual warmth.

"Sweetest Jemmy, you are the best, the most obedient husband I ever knew. You have flown on the wings of the wind."

"Business is business," replied Jemmy, rather sulkily submitting to the accustomed embrace. "What do you want?"

"Sit down, dearest love; sip this glass of Curaçoa, and you shall hear."

Mr. Chigwood smacked his lips, mollified by the delicious beverage, and then composed himself to listen.

"When I first employed you as a messenger between Sir Goodwin and my lady up-stairs, I thought the Baronet merely intended a simple affair of gallantry, and that he would pay me hand-

somely during the process. In that case, dearest Jemmy, our fortunes would have been made, and you and I would have returned to our beloved Bengal, and purchased a *zemindarry* of our own."

Mr. Chigwood shrugged his shoulders at the delightful prospect he had lost, but said nothing.

"I soon discovered, however, that Sir Goodwin's intentions were strictly honourable, and that he proposed marriage. Now, to this step there were one or two obstacles."

"The Major's cocked-hat, for instance?"

"Exactly. Besides that, Mrs. Norland has got an absurd love affair of her own."

"Mr. Starlinghurst?"

"Just so. There is some bond of union between them which I cannot explain."

"Perhaps I could, if I chose," said her husband aside, calling to mind the story which Loveridge had related in the prison.

"She loves him passionately, while he, although assuring me privately that he is weary of her attachment, appears to be attracted to her side by some mysterious influence. What is the result? Why, she refuses to marry Sir Goodwin, and will do all she can to prevent Starlinghurst marrying Sir Goodwin's daughter. Now, on these two weddings, dearest Jemmy, hang all our hopes of fortune. Both Sir Goodwin and his son-in-law will reward me handsomely on the day the cere-

mony is completed. You are my husband, therefore all that is mine is yours. You see what an interest you have at stake?"

"Does she mean what she says?" thought Mr. Chigwood.

"You can now understand my object in wishing to bring Major Norland on the scene. Were he proved alive, Starlinghurst would rejoice, as it would release him from any engagement he may have formerly made to the supposed widow, and set him free to marry Floretta Anerley."

"But, surely, the reappearance of her husband would at once prevent her own marriage with Sir Goodwin, which you have so much at heart?"

"Not if properly managed. I regard the matter in this way: Starlinghurst is ready to do anything to escape from the clutches of a faded woman of thirty without a guinea in her pocket, in order that he may wed a well-dowried tender Miss of nineteen. Sir Goodwin is also ready to do anything. The foolish old man is so madly entranced with Harriet Norland, that he will risk the possibility of a prosecution for bigamy to gain possession of her. The only person who will give me any trouble will be Harriet herself. But I can frighten her into compliance. Now, then, you shall hear my plan. In the first place, we do not believe that when the Major's cocked-hat was found in the Ganges his head was in it, do we?"

"No."

"In other words, then, it was a sham murder to hide a robbery. So that if he lives now, he must be a rascal?"

"Granted."

"Well, Jemmy, you may take it as a rule that a rascal is always terribly in want of money, and that he will do anything to get money. Only let me get speech of the Major, and he will be our willing confederate. He shall be introduced to Mrs. Norland in such a sudden melodramatic fashion as to excite her terror; he shall make himself as agreeable as he used to do in Calcutta, when between gambling, brandy-pawnee, and a hot sun, he went on like a lunatic. As soon as my lady is thoroughly satiated with his attentions, he shall make her two simple propositions. First, that she is to allow her beloved Frederick Starlinghurst to marry Floretta Anerley, without let or hindrance; secondly, that she is herself to wed Sir Goodwin. On these conditions the gallant Major will offer to retire once more into obscurity. As, however, he will require substantial payment for his services, I shall have to let Sir Goodwin partially into the secret. But, as I said just now, that old gentleman is so madly in love that he will make no objection. Another advantage in this scheme is, that as long as Norland lives we shall hold a sword over the head of the Baronet and his beautiful bride."

"You are a vastly clever woman, Serafina," remarked her husband, with a slight shudder. "But there is one objection to your neatly-contrived plan. I have not been able to discover any trace of the Major."

"You have advertised?"

"I have paragraphed in all the newspapers. I did not venture to give the full name, for fear of attracting the attention of the East India Company, who must themselves be anxious to apprehend such a defaulter. I advertised by means of initials, purposely misnaming places; but I am sure that had the Major read the advertisement he would have contrived to acquaint us with his existence. Here is a specimen of one of them.

"'M—j—r N——, supposed to be drowned at the island of Jamaica, West Indies, on the 5th of July, 1792. (I give the correct date.) If alive, show yourself; no danger now. Your ancient ally with the dark face, S. da S., wishes to tell you of something greatly to your advantage.'"

"Yes," said Serafina, listening with a critical air. "That will do pretty well, and should have brought him to light. But have you made no private inquiries?"

"My dear Serry, I have not the honour of being acquainted with any scoundrels. And except among such cattle, we are not very likely to find this invaluable officer."

"That is true, and you must go everywhere. Penetrate in disguise into thieves' kitchens, and listen to the conversation of footpads and highwaymen."

"I am much obliged to you, Mrs. C., but I am a man of peace, and have no desire to get my skull cracked by venturing among such desperadoes. As for disguises, I've had enough of them. I disguised a friend of mine the other day, and he was found out immediately."

"Coward!" sneered Serafina. "Oh that I were a man, or even a woman with an ordinary pale face! This accursed tropical tint would foil me everywhere, otherwise I would penetrate into the lowest haunts of St. Giles's, Westminster, and Whitechapel; I would visit the robbers' house of call in the Five Fields, near Sloane-street; I would question rogues of every degree till I gained some intelligence of the man I want. But you——"

"Well, my dear," replied Chigwood submissively, for he did not admire the fiery sparkle of those dark eyes, "I'll see what I can do. But disguises cost money, and there will be a deal of treating to be done, for the light-fingered gentry are usually thirsty souls. Dear Serafina," he said, taking her hand affectionately, "let me have five pounds?"

"What!" cried she. "Why, I have not so much in the house. Hush, here comes her ladyship.

Look cautiously at the side of the blind, if you wish to see her."

Mrs. Norland stepped daintily from a hackney-carriage, and ascended the steps that led to her own door. Her beautiful face wore an unusually pensive expression, and as her eyes unconsciously wandered to the window from which Mr. Chigwood was peeping, the full force of her melancholy gaze met his own. The hairdresser started. He had not seen Mrs. Norland since she landed from the Indiaman, pale, sickly, and dispirited. He now beheld her renovated by two years' residence in her native climate. He experienced such an emotion as a devotee may feel when earnestly contemplating a Virgin by Raffaelle or Murillo—no mere earthly admiration, but a sensation of intense and elevated regard. He felt that he could do anything for such a woman; that to win her esteem he would go to the uttermost parts of the earth, and pluck a hair from Prester John's beard. And only a minute before he had been leagued with his unscrupulous wife in a base cruel plot against that angelic creature! He felt ashamed of himself.

"And you call her a faded woman of thirty, Serry!" he whispered; "why, she's a more lovely creature than when she first visited my old master in Calcutta."

Mrs. Chigwood's eyes glittered malignantly as she noted the impression which had been made on the

susceptible barber's heart. She regretted having allowed him to enact the part of Peeping Tom.

"Indeed!" she sneered; "wait till you know her as well as I do, my pretty Jemmy, and you will learn what a silly, selfish, frivolous heart may beat under that white skin. Do you repent of my plan? Why, it is all for her good. At present she is a nondescript, neither wife nor widow; or, if anything, the wife or widow of a public criminal, who could not venture to show his face in Leadenhall-street. By marrying Sir Goodwin, she obtains an agreeable husband, of good birth, of engaging manners, with an ample fortune to spend. Why, if she were not a crazy fool, moonstruck with this peacock-feathered dandy, she would jump at the Baronet!"

"Well, it doesn't seem so bad after all," remarked Mr. Chigwood, affected by the cogency of his wife's arguments, and chilling in his regard to the beautiful face, now that it was withdrawn from his view. Besides, he was sorry to learn that the object of his devotion had become silly, selfish, and frivolous.

"And now my dear, about this five pounds."

"Five pounds! Five shillings, you mean. Whence should a poor dependent like me obtain such a sum?"

"Nonsense, Serafina. Do not put me off with

such hollow pretences. I came here to get five pounds, and five pounds I will have."

"Marry come up! as the rustic folks say, you have learnt a new tune, Master Jemmy! Supposing I should say you shall not have it?"

"In that case I should have to go home without it. But, Serafina, consider my poverty, and the difficulties that surround me. Consider the three children. They are yours as much as mine, yet I have to be both father and mother to them. For the last time, I ask you, will you give me the five pounds?"

"For the last time Jemmy, I say, No."

"Very well then. Good-bye." And kissing his wife's tawny cheek lightly, he opened the door which led into the passage.

Just then Mrs. Norland's tall figure passed by, as she entered her own private sitting-room.

"Good-bye, I say," repeated Mr. Chigwood. "Do you know where I am going?"

"Where?"

"To have a little talk with Mrs. Norland—to give her a few hints on the general aspect of affairs."

"You dare not, sir."

"I dare anything," replied the barber courageously, "for the sake of five pounds. Poverty has made me desperate."

"Then come hither, and embrace your Serafina," said his wife, extending her arms. "You profess to love me, and yet you leave me with a cold unwilling kiss upon my cheek."

Mr. Chigwood returned. He was not proof against the mingled fear and admiration he entertained for his wife. Although he would have been delighted to hear at any moment that she had taken ship for Calcutta, and quitted him for ever, he could not help being fascinated by her actual presence. And as she folded him in her arms, and allowed her glossy curls to rest against his cheek, his resolution began to fail him.

"Naughty Jemmy, to treat your Serafina so; you will be a good boy, won't you?"

"Ye—es," murmured the conquered husband.

"Then leave the house quietly, dearest; and do all you can to discover this Major. Find him, and our fortunes are secured."

As soon as Mr. Chigwood had departed, his wife drew a small sharp stiletto from the folds of her dress. "In case of emergency," she muttered. "But I should have only used it to frighten him. After all, I managed the affair much better. A loving embrace is far pleasanter to both parties than a dagger scene. If, however, he had remained obstinate and insisted on seeing her, I should have been obliged to bribe him with the five pounds;

now I have saved my money, and kept my little keen-edged persuader for another opportunity. Let me reflect on the state of affairs. These marriages must be hurried forward, before I lose all my influence. Since that night when I was so foolish as to give way to my temper, my control over Harriet has become weakened. If I don't take care she will slip from my grasp. The Major will be an admirable instrument to rivet the bonds once more. But suppose he is dead, or that my stupid Jemmy fails in discovering him. He is so necessary to my projects, that if he does not exist, I must invent him. I have plenty of letters in his handwriting. I have a clear recollection of his person. We must dress up a Major Norland, if all other means fail. And I can see that such a crisis is coming. Harriet has taken a virtuous turn. She has conceived a holy horror of green cloth, and absolutely declares that she would sooner earn her bread by honest mantua-making than by dealing the cards at faro. I must see Sir Goodwin, and sound him on these subjects. He is a cold-blooded old man in everything but the passion of love, and will be balked by nothing when his pleasures are to be gratified. Oh! for the day when these wedding-rings are placed on those fingers! Good-bye to cold, gloomy, dirty London, with its clammy fogs, and biting frosts. Hurrah

for Bengal! I left my native land a poor servant, I shall return an independent lady. After all, what harm shall I have done? The English go and rob the people of India, that they may live in luxury here; I shall simply convey back some of their ill-gotten wealth to my poor oppressed native country!"

CHAPTER XII.

A VISITOR IN EASTCHEAP.

Be so good as to request Mr. Foskett to step this way," said Sir Goodwin Anerley, as he sat in the inner sanctum of his counting-house, to the clerk who answered the bell.

Mr. Foskett presently made his appearance; a little, thin, yellow-faced, dried-up old gentleman with a powdered head, who bowed respectfully as he entered the merchant's private apartment. Mr. Foskett was the chief official of the house, a personage of immense experience in the colonial trade —no mere cockney, who only knew sugar as a manufactured product; he had resided for years in the West Indies, had managed plantations, superintended boiling-houses, and disposed of many a cargo of negroes to the highest bidder.

"Sit down, Foskett," said Sir Goodwin, who being a gentleman by birth and education, was remarkably easy and pleasant with all his subordinates. Not like Sir John Pigg, the great wax-chandler, who, as Sir Goodwin's clerks remarked, treated his inferiors since majesty had knighted him, as if he were the Czar of Muscovy, and they were serfs.

"I want your opinion, Foskett, about a private matter."

"Before going further, Sir Goodwin, permit me to state that, owing to the Government contract for rum now pending, molasses are very firm this morning, and in one instance, sixpence advance has been established."

"Good," exclaimed the Baronet; "we won't let Dobbs have that cargo that they've been haggling over for the last three days. Put a shilling on to the price, Foskett, and tell them, in your jocular way, they can take the lot at that rate, or leave it alone."

"He! he! he!" sniggered Mr. Foskett, in convulsions of delight; "won't Mr. Josiah Dobbs swear? I know they're dead on getting the rum contract, Sir Goodwin, for Mr. Josiah has been seen at the Navy Board every day this week, and the extra shilling will take the gilt off their gingerbread. He! he! he! And now, with regard to this private matter, Sir Goodwin?"

"Why, it concerns young Taswell, who was to have been my son-in-law, Foskett."

"Ah, dear, dear; silly young man, silly young man."

"Well, Alderman Bromwich has written me a long and energetic letter on the subject. He says that a strong feeling of dissatisfaction exists among the citizens of London at the continued detention of this young gentleman; that the minor charges of seditious conduct brought against him are of the most frivolous character, while the principal charge, namely, that of publishing treasonable handbills, has been refuted by the voluntary confession of one Loveridge or Lancefield, who avers that the handbills in question (a farrago of the most revolutionary trash you ever read, Foskett) were concocted entirely by himself. This man stands a good chance, of course, of learning what a kangaroo is like, and botanising at Sir Joseph Banks's delightful bay; but as for Taswell, Bromwich and a number of other influential citizens say he should be released at once."

"Why don't they send a deputation to Downing-street?"

"Because they are all Opposition men, and the minister would give them the cold shoulder. So they want me to do it. They argue thus: 'You are a Tory, whose vote Mr. Pitt can depend upon; he will listen to you.' They also hint that after the

rumours which have been circulated as to Taswell's arrest, namely, that it originated in an act of private vengeance, the act would come with peculiar grace from myself."

"What do you suppose young Taswell will do when he comes out of prison?"

"I can't say. He won't marry Floretta."

"No, no, of course not, poor lad; why, he hasn't a shilling. But might he not prevent somebody else from marrying Miss Floretta?"

"Hum! he might." A curious expression here passed over Sir Goodwin's keen puckered face. "As you say, he might; but in such a case as this, public considerations alone are to be regarded; and, in my opinion, the boy has had confinement enough to cure him of Jacobinism for the rest of his days."

"So say I, Sir Goodwin. Release him, and if you could just whisper in Billy Pitt's ear to clap that lunatic Wilberforce in the empty cell, why he'd be doing a good service to the West India proprietors."

"Ha! ha! Foskett, you've always an eye to business."

Here a clerk knocked at the door.

"Come in," exclaimed Sir Goodwin.

"A lady wishes to see your honour."

"A lady! What is she like, and what is her name?"

"She was closely veiled, your honour, and declined to give any name. She said something concerning an estate in the island of St. Domingo."

"Some unlucky French refugee," remarked Mr. Foskett, "whose black Friends of Liberty have burnt all her sugar. Well, Sir Goodwin, I will retire."

"Ay, if you please," said the Baronet, who suspected Donna Serafina to be his visitor; "and I say, Foskett, ask Dobbs eighteenpence advance. The markets must go up with the present state of things."

"You may be sure I shall get all I can, he! he! he!" and the chief clerk quitted the apartment, just as a tall lady rustled past him.

Sir Goodwin rose with some difficulty, owing to his gouty foot, and handed his visitor a chair.

"May I ask your name, madam?" he said.

The lady raised her veil, and discovered the lovely features of Harriet Norland.

"Heavens, Mrs. Norland!" exclaimed Sir Goodwin, "to what unlooked-for good fortune do I owe this delightful surprise? We parted somewhat coldly when last we met. But I forgive and forget. And I trust, dear Amanda, you do the same."

"I have nothing to forgive you," replied Mrs. Norland.

"And now, touching this unlucky St. Domingo estate?"

His visitor smiled faintly.

"Pardon me, Sir Goodwin, it was but an excuse to divert curiosity."

"Then your real object in doing me this honour is——"

"To ask a favour."

"Name it, my dear madam; I shall find it hard to refuse you."

"To use your political influence with the Government, which I know is great, to procure the liberty of Mr. Arthur Taswell."

"Curiously enough, that was the very subject I was discussing with my chief clerk at the moment of your arrival."

"And have you decided to apply for his release?"

"Madam," said the Baronet, assuming an air of senatorial gravity, "as a champion of the cause of order against the cause of anarchy, I should say, 'Let that young man await his trial, and let a jury of his fellow-countrymen decide the question of his guilt or innocence.' As a private individual, Mrs. Norland, you are aware that I approach this subject with the most painful feelings. But, first, permit me to ask why you interest yourself in the fate of a man who is, I believe, an utter stranger to you?"

"One reason is, that I wish to make some slight reparation to a person whom I once deeply injured.

That man has requested me to obtain Mr. Taswell's freedom. A second reason is—but I fear I shall be too frank, Sir Goodwin?"

"Not at all, my dear madam, I will be equally frank with you."

"Then, Sir Goodwin, I will tell you the truth. I wish to release the man to whom I consider your daughter rightly belongs, that I may retain my own Frederick Starlinghurst in my sole undivided possession."

The same curious expression passed over Sir Goodwin's face which we have noticed before.

"In good truth, Mrs. Norland, you are sincere with a vengeance! You coolly ask a petition of me which will effect a double purpose. In the first place, you hope by the aid of Taswell's rivalry to deprive me of Starlinghurst for a son-in-law; in the second place, you deliberately tell me that this plan will place you in undisturbed possession of Mr. Starlinghurst; in other words, that my chances of obtaining you as a wife are gone for ever. I repeat, I admire your frankness, madam. How can you expect me to raise a finger to save a man whose political sentiments I detest, and whose first act on coming out of prison would be to deprive me of a worthy son-in-law, and (pardon me for saying the word) of an angel of a wife, at one blow? Besides, you forget, madam, caged men become desperate. Suppose Mr. Taswell should

use his newly-acquired liberty to challenge your darling Frederick; supposing he should kill him—what then?"

"Such is my jealous love, that I would sooner see him dead at my feet than the husband of another woman."

"How can those lovely lips open to deliver such stern sentiments? You see the difficulties of my position, madam?"

"I do, indeed, and should, on that account, were you to accede to my request, hold you in higher esteem than if you wrote me the most impassioned love-letters for a twelvemonth in succession."

"Then," exclaimed the Baronet, starting up as if with sudden emotion, "the deed shall be done. Your sweet lips, your eloquent beseeching eyes, your tender glances, have unmanned me. Bid me discharge my clerks, sink my ships, burn my plantations, free my negroes; yes, even that I believe I should do at your request. To parody the expression of Coriolanus, I may say,

> O my Amanda, O,
> You have won a happy victory to Taswell:
> But for myself—believe it, O believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with me prevailed!"

"Thanks, dear Sir Goodwin, thanks," exclaimed Mrs. Norland, her eyes filling with tears. "Now that I know the real kindness of your heart, I feel that I could love you."

"Oh! that I could persuade you to do so! But to descend to prose. Do not conceive that I am all-powerful. On the contrary, my application may be unsuccessful. And such is the terror of anarchy and sedition prevailing throughout the country, that I am constantly receiving letters beseeching me to use all my influence to press the severity of the law to the utmost limits. Here is one," pursued the unblushing Baronet, laying his hand on Alderman Bromwich's epistle, "praying me, on behalf of a numerously signed body of Tory citizens, to do what I can to obtain a prosecution in this very instance."

"So much the more shall I thank you, Sir Goodwin, if you succeed."

Mrs. Norland offered her hand, the Baronet kissed it respectfully, and conducted her to the hired carriage which was waiting at his door. As she drove away, Mr. Foskett entered the counting-house in an ecstasy of mirth.

"He! he! he! Sir Goodwin, you should have heard Mr. Josiah swear. The army in Flanders was nothing to it. But I nicked him. I knew he must have the molasses. So, after a little parley, I sold at fifteenpence advance. I made a great merit of letting him off the odd threepence."

"Well done, Foskett. Just tell them to order out the carriage. I must go to Downing-street about this young Jacobin's release."

"I am glad to hear it, Sir Goodwin. And don't forget to put in a word against the Will-by-force emancipating gentry, he! he! he!"

Sir Goodwin's explanations, backed by the alderman's letter, soon induced the great minister to take a favourable view of Arthur Taswell's case, for indeed a more kind-hearted and less vindictive man than William Pitt never held the seals of office. He promised to communicate with the magistrates before whom the case had been heard, and hinted that an immediate liberation would probably follow.

"But, Sir Goodwin," added Mr. Pitt, "I hope you won't ask me to let that other fellow out. What's his name? Loveridge, *alias* Lancefield. The country gentlemen are in such a state of terror, that they would be ready to impeach me. I am told he is a real fanatic of the Anacharsis Clootz breed, who honestly believes that I am the enemy of the human race, that I contrived the September massacres, raised the negroes in St. Domingo, and invented the guillotine to bring opprobrium on a glorious and spotless Revolution. Poor wretch! For my part, I wish he were out of prison, and on his way to enrol himself under Mr. Washington's star-spangled banner. I would willingly pay his passage out of my private purse to get rid of him. I abhor these state prosecutions, especially as they usually end in an acquittal."

There was a triumphant smile on Sir Goodwin's face as his carriage passed through the Strand, on his way back to the City. His reflections were of the following nature :

"I have done a good action apparently against my own interests. But I don't care much about Starlinghurst, and I do care a great deal about Mrs. Norland. I have made an agreeable impression upon her to-day, there is no doubt about that. Well, what will be the upshot of this young barrister's release? I have no fear of Floretta running away with him. She takes after her father, and has too great a respect for pounds, shillings, and pence, to tie herself up to a man without a sixpence, or a prospect of getting a brief. Supposing Taswell comes pistol in hand, and challenges Starlinghurst; that elegant gentleman may possibly show the white feather, retire to Germany, and leave the coast clear for me. Supposing they fight, and one gets killed—well, in either case I shall lose a once-intended son-in-law with a certain amount of tranquil emotion. The real obstacle to my marriage with Amanda is that abominable Major; if we could only prove him dead, or bribe him into silence if living, everything would go well."

Sir Goodwin was in excellent spirits that evening. His crabbed irritability had disappeared, and he made himself so agreeable to Miss Thrupp and

his daughters, that, on their withdrawal from the dining-room, they all began to speculate on the cause which had restored his easy, bantering, placable disposition. The Baronet was no wine-drinker, and shortly joined the ladies up-stairs.

"Well, my dears," he said, on entering the drawing-room, "I have a piece of news for you. Arthur Taswell is to be set at liberty directly."

While his hearers were uttering various exclamations of surprise, Sir Goodwin detailed the circumstances which had led to the young man's release.

Lucy sprang up, and throwing her arms round her father's neck, kissed him heartily.

"Dear papa," she exclaimed, "how much better you are than you profess to be! While outwardly you appeared so indifferent to Arthur's fate, you have in reality been working to effect his freedom!"

"Don't praise me too much, my dear Lucy," replied her father, gently disengaging himself from the young lady's enthusiastic caresses. "You know not how much political expediency may have to do with the step I have taken. And you, my dear Floretta, what think you of this?" added the Baronet, laying his hand on his elder daughter's fair shoulder.

Floretta frowned, and bent her eyes on the carpet. At length she said, "Father, you know

that Arthur Taswell has forfeited my esteem, and that with your consent I have transferred my love to another. I think less of Mr. Taswell's release as it concerns himself, than as it may concern Frederick."

"What do you mean, Floretta?" asked Sir Goodwin.

"I mean that when these men parted in this room, a quarrel was impending between them, which was only prevented by Mr. Taswell's arrest; what if that quarrel be renewed now he is at liberty?"

"Pooh! nonsense," said her father. "Poor Taswell has something else to think about. From what I hear of his uncle's affairs, I doubt if he has a shilling to call his own. He is far more likely to come and beg a situation in my counting-house, than to challenge your beloved Frederick."

"How singularly this young man has been punished for the terrible doctrines he has endeavoured to promulgate," exclaimed Miss Thrupp. "At the moment of their dissemination, an avenging Providence sweeps away his uncle's carefully accumulated wealth!"

"'Tis rather hard though, Miss Thrupp," replied the bantering Baronet, "to describe Avenging Providence as a high Tory; if she is, she is admirably impartial, for old Tobias Taswell, who suffers quite as much as his nephew, is one of the real old

fossil pigtails who believes in the divine right of kings, and avers that the Americans will soon get tired of Mr. Washington, and invite George the Third once more to come and reign over them."

Here the footman entered the room, and silently handed a letter to Floretta. Lucy watched her face as she read it, and observed by the working of her lips that she was strongly affected. Presently, the elder sister rose and left the room. The younger shortly after followed her, unnoticed by Sir Goodwin and the governess, who were warmly engaged in an animated political discussion. Lucy entered her sister's chamber, and found her seated on the bed, with her head resting on the pillow, weeping silently.

"Floretta, dearest, what is the matter?"

"Spiteful creature that you are, Lucy," exclaimed her sister, angrily, through her tears, "to follow me thus, that you may triumph over me."

"This is folly, Floretta; why should I wish to triumph over you? I saw that something had grieved you, and I came, as a sister should, to console you."

"Much consolation you are likely to administer. You detest Frederick, and love Arthur Taswell."

"Detest is a strong word, Floretta; but I won't argue on that subject. As for poor Arthur, you should be much obliged to me for taking an interest in your cast-off lovers. Come, Floretta, dry

your tears, and tell me whom the letter is from. Although I am the younger sister, perhaps I can give you some good advice."

"There, read it," said Floretta, tossing the note to her sister.

"From my Cell, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 1795.

"DEAREST FLORETTA,—I once more venture to address you by this title, because I hope, ere long, to be reinstated in your favour, by proving the utter unworthiness of your present lover. Since I parted from you I have heard that of him which justifies all I said in your presence. I pray you, for the sake of your own future happiness, at least to suspend your judgment concerning him. At present I am powerless to hurt him, but should I ever regain my freedom I will seek that man, and demand at his hands satisfaction for the injuries he has done me. Possibly this letter will reach his eye; the coward will naturally attempt to prolong my imprisonment and to ensure my condemnation, but I do not fear him. There is still some semblance of justice left in England. My detestation for him is as deep as my love for you is sincere. Heaven bless you, my sweet Floretta.

"Your unfortunate lover,

"ARTHUR TASWELL."

"According to the date," said Lucy, "this letter

was written several days since. He evidently was unaware of his approaching release."

"This is what I dreaded," sobbed Floretta. "He will emerge from prison like a raging wild beast, and will kill my Frederick."

"We must prevent their meeting. 'Tis fortunate that Mr. Starlinghurst is now at his father's country-house. Who brought this letter?"

"The little hairdresser, Chigwood."

"Why has he delayed it so long?"

"I know not."

"Let us go down and question him."

"You go, Lucy."

"I will if you'll kiss me, and say you forgive me."

"I forgive you," murmured Floretta, somewhat mechanically kissing her sister's cheek.

Lucy then descended the stairs, and inquiring for Mr. Chigwood, requested him to enter the housekeeper's room.

"Why did you not deliver this letter sooner?" she demanded.

"A thousand pardons, Miss Lucy, I entreat, for my neglect. The truth is, Miss, I was afraid to come near the house. Having the misfortune to be connected with a little association for amending the constitution of this country, I was informed that Sir Goodwin had heard of it, and intended kicking me out of the house."

"Nonsense, Mr. Chigwood; my father is far too liberal and enlightened a man to persecute any one for their opinions."

"I feared that Miss Thrupp——"

"Poor lady!" said Lucy, aside, "she is not strong enough, otherwise she is capable of it. But now, with regard to this letter, Mr. Chigwood. Are you aware of its contents?"

"Not a word, Miss."

"Then I will inform you. Mr. Taswell threatens deadly vengeance upon Mr. Frederick Starlinghurst, should he ever be set at liberty. Perhaps you have not heard the news. He is to be released at once."

"Mr. Taswell out of jail! Hurrah!" exclaimed the hairdresser. Then, suddenly checking himself, with an air of alarm, as if he thought Miss Thrupp might have heard him, he said, "I beg your humble pardon, Miss."

"Never mind that now," said Lucy. "Listen to me. You must prevent Mr. Taswell from encountering Mr. Starlinghurst until at least he has been long enough at liberty for his passions to have cooled down. Mr. Starlinghurst is at present in the country, but an unemployed desperate man may follow him thither. You must find some work for Mr. Taswell at once that will keep his energies occupied and his mind actively engaged. Can you accomplish this?"

"'Tis a difficult job to find a poor gentleman anything to do, unless he enlists as a soldier."

"That is not to be thought of," exclaimed Lucy. "You must devise some other plan."

"I have an idea, but it will require money."

"How much?"

"Ten to twenty pounds might do it."

"Then, see, I have come prepared," said Lucy, displaying several necklaces, brooches, and bracelets.

"What! sell all these, Miss? Why, if Sir Goodwin discovers it he'll be ready to eat you!"

"Can you not raise money upon them?"

"Yes, Miss, we could pawn them."

"Then do so. And how do you propose to employ Mr. Taswell?"

"As a sort of missionary, Miss. He'll travel about through——"

The door opened, and the barber's explanation was cut short by the entrance of Miss Thrupp.

"Lucy!" said she, in a tone of surprise, "what are you doing here with this person? Oh! I perceive, it is Chigwood. Chigwood, I was exceedingly sorry to hear, from a most respectable person, the late proprietor of your shop, a deplorable account of your political views."

"I trust I have seen the error of my ways, madam," answered the hairdresser, hanging down

his head sheepishly. "Church and King shall be my motto for the future."

"Mr. Chigwood has seen Arthur in prison," said Lucy, vivaciously.

"Oh!" remarked the governess, drily, "that was when you were yourself taken into custody, Mr. Chigwood?"

"A case of mistaken identity, madam. They took me for a most desperate character, who has since fled to America. I assure you, madam, my principles are sound at bottom." The barber fidgeted about for a minute or two. At length he said, in the most mellifluous voice: "Has Sir Goodwin, madam, appointed any other hairdresser yet?"

"Not permanently," replied Miss Thrupp.

"Might I be permitted to resume my functions?"

"I will consult Sir Goodwin," answered the governess.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUT OF JAIL.

THE sensation of newly-acquired freedom is not always agreeable. Historical examples may be cited of men who shuddered at the sight of daylight, and entreated with tears to be restored to their cells. And even when the imprisonment has been of short duration, liberty brings with it a weight of care and responsibility from which the captive is free. The discharged thief, welcomed at the prison-gates by his depraved associates, feels his joys diminished by the recollection that he is once more dependent for his daily bread on the skilfulness of his fingers. Let us imagine, then, the feelings of a man who entered his cell respected and wealthy, who quitted it a few weeks later shunned by his former acquaintance, and utterly unprovided with the means of subsistence. Such

was Arthur Taswell's evil case. All his friends looked coldly on him. Those who would have excused his poverty took fright at his politics; those who cared little whether he was a disciple of Pitt or Thelwall, provided his purse was full, shrank from contact with a penniless man just enlarged from jail. His first step after his release was to call upon his uncle, Tobias Taswell, and ascertain from his own lips whether the sinister accounts which had reached him in prison might not be, in some measure, exaggerated. He derived little consolation from the visit. He found the man whom he had seen a month ago a quiet, precise, methodical old gentleman, sitting with disordered dress, bloodshot eyes, and uncovered head, drinking raw brandy before noonday. In reply to the young man's anxiously-repeated inquiries, he made answer in words of the wildest self-reproach.

"Gone, gone, all gone, my poor boy!" he exclaimed, spreading out his hands, and bursting into tears. "Yes, Arthur, you and I are beggars!"

The young man, who came prepared to administer stern rebuke, was touched at the pitiable semi-lunatic condition to which his uncle was reduced, especially when he ascertained from his broken exclamations that his aunt and cousins, who were staying in the country, were as yet ignorant of what had occurred.

"Poor Anna!" murmured the old man. "It

will go near to kill thee, so fond of money as thou art! Lord have mercy upon me!" he exclaimed, sinking on his knees, and elevating his trembling hands. "Lord, pardon me for my greediness! But I meant honestly. I had none but daughters of my own, and I wanted the only male descendant to be a man of consequence. For that I toiled and schemed day and night, and this," he added, with a doleful sigh, "is the end of it all!"

Taswell presently quitted the house, and repaired to his chambers in Gray's Inn. He found that the agents of Government had opened his drawers and bureau, ransacking for seditious papers; while his laundress, probably holding that no Jacobin could possibly want silver spoons, had eloped with his plate and other small valuables. His wardrobe had also been extensively plundered; in short, little remained in his rooms except articles of furniture which were too bulky to be surreptitiously removed. After a careful examination of the premises, in hopes of discovering the missing property, and a visit to the treasurer of the Inn, who promised to put the affair in the hands of an active Bow-street officer, Taswell returned to his desolate apartments, made up a small package of clothing, and then summoned a broker, to whom he disposed of the whole of his remaining effects. The amount realised by this transaction was little more than sufficient to pay several outstanding

accounts. After these had been discharged, Taswell found himself a free man, indebted to nobody, and possessed of exactly fifteen shillings and sixpence in current coin of the realm. He was contemplating this sum as it lay in the palm of his hand with melancholy earnestness, the broker was removing the last article of furniture, protesting, as he gasped for breath in the doorway, that, in the name of Moses and all the prophets, he had never made so bad a bargain in his life, when a person reached the landing, narrowly escaping the receipt of one of the bedstead-legs in his eye.

"Vy don't yer look out vere you're comin' to?" said the broker, sulkily, as the injured person rubbed his face.

"You're a pretty fellow," replied the other, good humouredly, "to knock a man down first, and bully him afterwards. Is Mr. Taswell in?"

"Yes; are you going to buy anythink of him?"

"Why?"

"You'll find him a wuss Jew nor me. S'elp me Abraham I never see such rubbidge in my born days as his furnitur."

"You won't say that the next time I pass your shop. Good-bye."

And the visitor entered Taswell's empty chambers. The young man was standing in front of the fireplace, mechanically regarding the money in his hand.

"Chigwood!" he exclaimed, with a start.

"The same, sir," replied the barber. Then, waving his hat over his head, he cried, "Welcome once more to the air of Liberty! But I say, Mr. Taswell," continued Mr. Chigwood, glancing round the apartment, "you are scudding under bare poles, as we used to say aboard ship. What does this mean, sir?"

"It means poverty," replied the other, bitterly. "It means starvation, when this wretched sum which I hold in my hand is expended."

"Nonsense, Mr. Taswell; you are full of youth and energy, you will soon find employment."

"Who will employ a broken-down gentleman, a liberated Jacobin, as they will call me? See the thousands of poor creatures who are shivering at the corners of the streets in this great city, and tell me what is my chance."

"Your broker says you are a keen hand at a bargain, Mr. Taswell."

"Does he?" remarked the young man, with a short laugh, which ended in a sigh. "Such is one of the effects of poverty! A month ago, I should have bidden him name his own price. But now I battled with him, tooth and nail, and clutched at every sixpence. What news from Bedford-square, Chigwood?"

"I delivered your letter to Miss Anerley. She has returned no answer. Take my advice and

give her up, Mr. Taswell. The young lady is bent on marrying Mr. Starlinghurst."

"She shall never wed him if I can prevent it," exclaimed Taswell, fiercely. "And what brings you here, Mr. Chigwood? Remember, I have no means of rewarding your services at present."

"Citizen," retorted the barber, proudly drawing up his small person, "I need no reward. I have come to offer you employment. Read this," he said, handing an official-looking document to his questioner. Taswell read it in silence.

"The matter," he remarked, at length, "is more innocent than the beginning and ending would have led me to suppose. A paper that commences with 'Liberty Hall, Liberty Court, third year of the Enlightenment of the People,' and winds up with '*Ça ira*,' looks inflammatory enough; but the purport of the letter is simply a request to me to visit certain districts in Kent, as an accredited delegate of the London Corresponding Society, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the inhabitants, and stimulating their ardour in the cause of Constitutional Reform. The mission is after my own heart; a month since I should have embraced it eagerly, but alas! now I must betake myself to some humble calling, in order to gain the necessaries of life."

"The Society has considered that point," replied

the hairdresser. "They know your altered position, and beg, as a token of their sympathy for your sufferings in the cause of liberty, that you will accept funds sufficient for the journey." Mr. Chigwood drew out a leathern purse, and displayed a number of guineas.

"It goes sorely against the grain with me to accept payment for what should be the unpaid service of a good citizen," said Taswell; "still more, to take the aggregate pence of half-starved artisans for this purpose."

"I am forbidden to tell you how the fund has been collected; let it suffice to say, that it is the gift of the rich, not the offering of the poor."

"In that case, I will accept the employment. Zeal for the cause of true freedom I possessed long since; discretion I have learnt in prison. I hope by the combination of both to serve my country."

The hairdresser entered fully into the details of the affair, and eventually quitted Gray's Inn, after extracting a promise from Taswell that he would start for the scene of his labours on the following day, without attempting to gain an interview with any member of the Anerley family.

"What a thing it is," murmured Mr. Chigwood to himself, as he crossed South-square, "to be an honest man. How my fingers did itch after those

guineas! They would have kept me and the children in comfort for weeks, instead of being wasted on a piece of crazy enthusiasm. But no, I am strictly honest. Miss Lucy's gewgaws fetched twenty-one guineas six shillings and sixpence, at the pawnbroker's. I delivered eighteen guineas to the young lawyer; the remainder I consider a fair and honourably-earned commission. Not a sixpence of it shall old Gattrell get, if I can avoid it. Here is a shoemaker's shop; I will treat Plassey to a pair of new boots."

CHAPTER XIV.

A MISSIONARY TOUR.

We prefer to give the account of Arthur Taswell's tour in his own words, as they appear in his diary, the ink of which is embrowned, and the paper yellowed by the lapse of nearly seventy years. Should the reader be inclined to smile at his sentimental reflections, or sneer at his political disquisitions, let him remember the circumstances of the man, and the peculiarities of the time.*

Open disaffection was, on the whole, less rampant than it had been in the preceding year. The atrocities of the later stages of the French Revolution had alienated many of its early English friends, who now mournfully began to acknowledge the truth of Mr. Burke's predictions; while the successes of the Republican armies, and their career of conquest in Holland, had aroused the

* The diary attributed in this chapter to Arthur Taswell is copied almost *verbatim* from a genuine record of the period.

ancient national jealousy of France. Moreover, the glorious victory of the first of June had excited much latent patriotism, and proved that England's navy was as gallant and as efficient as in the days of Rodney. On the other hand, the failure of the Duke of York in Holland, the increasing burdens produced by the war, and the enhanced price of provisions, caused much discontent; while the rabid efforts of the Church and King zealots to crush all freedom of opinion, and to refuse all measures of reasonable reform, reacted in disloyalty. A large and influential party cried for peace. "The bloody Reign of Terror," they argued, "has ended in France, a government, humane and moderate by comparison, rules in the place of Robespierre, why should we endeavour to force Bourbon royalty on an unwilling people?" To this the ministers replied, that they cared not who was king in France, but that so long as she preached sedition and aggrandisement, England's only security lay in war. With this brief political sketch, let us turn to Arthur Taswell's humble diary.

"*February* 18*th*, 1795.—I slept last night at the Blossoms Inn, Lawrence-lane, and took my seat in the Rochester coach at nine this morning. The coach had not proceeded above two hundred yards, when it was pursued by a gentleman, shouting and hallooing. He presently took his seat inside,

where up to this time I had been the only passenger. The new comer proved to be an opera-dancer, and I soon felt inclined to exclaim with *Goldfinch*, in the 'Road to Ruin,' 'D—n all dancing-masters and their umbrellas;' for this gentleman insisted on closing every avenue whereby air could enter the coach, alleging that rheumatism and ruin would be the consequence of admitting a draught. We passed over the dreary waste of Blackheath about ten o'clock. I thought of highwaymen, and of the lady who, as she was seated in her drawing-room at Westcombe Park, saw a robbery which was being perpetrated on the heath reflected in her mirror. However, no highwaymen appeared, somewhat to my disappointment, having a curiosity to see whether the guard would use a pair of pistols which he displayed with great ostentation. At three in the afternoon, we arrived at Chatham. I put up at the inn to which I had been recommended, and found the landlord a true friend of liberty, though somewhat averse to open display, on account of the number of military men who are his customers, but who would desert him were his principles made public. I had scarcely finished dinner, when two persons, dressed in the garb of gentlemen, were introduced to me by the landlord. I demanded to know their business. They replied, 'It is not necessary; we know you and your business, Mr. Taswell, well enough.'

'Indeed,' I said. 'Yes; you are come hither to disseminate sedition. Beware! there are plenty of eyes watching you, and your next Government lodging will be the Tower.' To such heights has the vile system of spying and informing reached in our beloved country, that the wretches are scattered everywhere! I doubt not but these fellows have tracked me from London.

"*February* 19*th*, *Thursday*.—Up early, seeking lodgings, for I must be sparing of the resources entrusted to my charge. Found very clean, cheerful, and reasonable apartments in Love-lane. Ominous title! Those four letters make a potent word—a word much in my thoughts during my imprisonment. Sweet and enchanting, yet false and deceitful Floretta! How vividly do I behold thy image now, as I look up from my paper to the vacancy of that dark corner! My landlady is a charming woman; she is tall and upright, with cheeks as fair and ruddy as apples. Her dark hair is turned over a roll before and behind, and confined by a mob-cap, white as the driven snow. How different to our trolloping, slipshod, London trading people, with their paltry imitation of persons of quality!

"A deputation of delegates called on me to-day, and by invitation I am to address a meeting of friends of parliamentry reform to-morrow evening. Went to the circulating library to read the London

papers, which arrive daily at three o'clock. Stinging remarks in the *Post* and *Chronicle* on the conduct of the war.

"*February 20th, Friday.*—To the eye of a Londoner accustomed to our noble streets and spacious squares, these towns appear very sorry places. Rochester possesses but one street, and that neither paved nor lighted. Chatham is still worse, very dirty, and full of soldiers. I saw the soldiers on parade to-day. Let the recruiting-sergeants say what they like, when they pin the gay ribbons to the hat of some silly, love-stricken countryman, about a soldier's life being a jolly one. The faces I saw to-day give them the lie direct. Sullen discontent appeared in every countenance. Is it to be wondered at when the blows with the cane were almost incessant? Strange! that treatment which ordinarily would make a free-born Briton's blood boil, must be endured uncomplainingly when he wears a red coat. It made my heart bleed to watch these poor fellows being tortured into discipline. When disciplined enough, they will be sent as sheep to the slaughter, to keep up (forsooth) the balance of power in Europe. I spoke for an hour at the meeting to-night, and trust I did good. One man complained that there were more people present than the room could hold. He was advised to diminish the number by himself quitting the assemblage.

"*February* 22*nd*, *Sunday*.—Saw the soldiers again on their way to church. The combined effect of bright uniforms, glittering weapons, gay music, and rapid movement, was most exhilarating. Yet, consider the actors who perform in this pleasing drama. They are one and all discontented, and would give all their prospects of glory and Chelsea Hospital to be back at the plough, the carpenter's bench, or the forge again. Heaven forgive me the thought, but I could not help reflecting that should we ever be compelled, as Loveridge vows we shall, to assert our rights by open force, it would be well for the people to accustom themselves to the sight of regular troops. Half their terrors would vanish with familiarity. I went into the church and joined in the prayers, which, whatever Tom Paine may say, are among the noblest and most soothing of human compositions. Besides, they recal my mother's sweet mild face, as I used to sit on her knee, with my little hands joined together, lisping out the Belief. Ah me! I was neither Tory nor Jacobin in those days, but a happy, innocent child. I could not stand the sermon. The parson was of the old school, with a full-bottomed wig and a red nose, which looked as if it could be tickled with a tithe-pig's tail; when he gave out the text, "Fear God, and honour the king," and began thundering against anarchy and dissent, I slipped out of the church. I wonder what the poor soldiers thought of it. I

doubt they would sooner be nodding in church, than under that terrible sergeant-major's rattan! What a mockery of an equality before God is that pew-system, by the way! And the Dissenters are just as bad. Their green seats are as exclusive as the royal box at Drury Lane Theatre. Spent a pleasant and profitable half-hour strolling about the churchyard.

"*February 25th, Wednesday.*—I made the acquaintance yesterday of a very pleasant officer of Marines, who is on duty in one of the prison ships. He is secretly a friend of liberty, but dares not, as his Majesty's servant (Query? *slave*), express his sentiments openly. He has this day kindly taken me aboard the *Ville de Paris*, one hundred and ten guns, a ship captured from the French, but now one of our men-of-war. The cleanliness and order displayed in this immense vessel impressed me deeply. I was amused by a one-armed sailor, with whom I had some conversation. Speaking of the loss of his arm, he remarked, 'It's curious the shot never took me off my *bowls*,' meaning his legs. Then, showing me the cannon-balls piled on the deck, he said, 'These are the sugar-plums we give our enemies.' He told me that during an action the surgeon and chaplain both take their station in the cock-pit; the one to amputate, the other to serve out grog to the wounded. After this we visited the prison-ship. It was grievous to see all those poor fellows, torn from their homes and their country, from nothing

but the mutual jealousy and misunderstanding of their rulers. Individual Frenchmen do not hate individual Englishmen; why, then, should there be such a thing as national hatred? It is caused by mutual fear, arising from ignorance. I foolishly asked some of the prisoners to dance the *Carmagnole*. They responded like the Jews of old, '*Monsieur, le musique est en France.*' I told them all the news I could think of. They had actually never heard of the fall of the tyrant Robespierre, which occurred more than six months ago. I then bestowed on them a trifle in money, for which they seemed deeply grateful. One poor creature, who had been confined twenty months, asked earnestly for a shilling. I felt quite ashamed at the low bows they made me.

"*February 26th, Thursday.*—Went to the Chatham Assembly, less for the sake of dancing, for which my heart is too heavy at the present time, than to observe the manners and customs of the people. Party spirit runs higher here than in London. Opposed politicians will not traffic with each other; they patronise rival inns. The gay scene recalled to my memory Deputy Toker's ball, where my Floretta behaved with such cruelty. Conversed with a lady who upheld the rights of women. 'Sir,' she said, 'a female legislature would never have passed these horrid Convention bills, or abrogated the dear liberty of speech.'

"*February 27th, Friday.*—The cause of freedom

advances. Seventeen hundred workmen at the dockyard, who were brought up to sign an address thanking the Government for passing the Convention bills, rushed away *en masse* to sign the petition against them instead. And the Church is in danger! I have had the honour of seeing the Bishop of Rochester burnt in a tar-barrel, in effigy be it understood. It seems the bishop uttered the following scandalous language: 'The people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them.' The most popular member of the Upper House in these parts is Lord Stanhope.

"*February* 28*th*, *Saturday*.—Oppression is the order of the day. A working shoemaker, a most quiet, inoffensive person, informed me this morning that having attended one or two of our meetings in favour of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, he was sent for by the commanding officer at the barracks. 'So, sir, you've turned Jacobin and sedition-monger,' shouted the man of war. 'Not another shoe shall you make for the soldiers.' The poor man has no other means of subsistence, and I suspect that dire necessity will compel him to revisit the colonel, and make a humble recantation of his political opinions.

"*March* 1*st*, *Sunday*.—In place of going to church, I set forth and walked along the banks of the river Medway, until I came to the village of Snodland. Owing to my confinement in jail, I was

unused to laborious exercise, and as I sat down in the churchyard which abuts on the river, I became quite faint and exhausted. All the village folks were in the church, save one or two idle boys, who were playing among the tombstones, and an old man who, with his body bent towards the ground, wandered among the tombs, apparently searching for something. I listened for a while to the various sounds around me, which were all of a soothing quality. The gentle ripple of the stream, at last released from its icy barriers, the distant lowing of the cattle, even the monotonous tones of the parson and his clerk, and the noise of clarionet and fiddle, contributed to the general harmony of nature. As I leaned against a tombstone, and gazed across the water at the high grounds of Burham opposite, my eyes became gradually dim, I sank gently down on the greensward, and fell asleep. I dreamed strange vivid dreams. I thought I beheld Floretta advancing and holding out her arms as a token of reconciliation. As she approached me, her features changed into those of her sister Lucy. Then I saw Walter Loveridge on a platform, surrounded by a countless number of people. I was presently aroused from these visions to the realities of life by a hand which shook my coat-collar briskly."

CHAPTER XV.

SERAFINA'S CASH-BOX.

THE three guineas which Mr. Chigwood had appropriated as a lawful charge on Miss Lucy Anerley's bounty proved highly serviceable, but under the combined appetites of the bears, the apprentices, and the children, to say nothing of the spirituous liquors consumed by the virtuous republicans who visited his shop, they soon dwindled away. Business had not improved; it had become worse than ever. The grandiloquent advertisement in the columns of the *Public Advertiser* had ceased to appear for a twofold reason. First, the proprietors of the journal demanded cash down for the insertion of any further announcements, which did not suit the hairdresser's financial arrangements; secondly, the public had, to use a phrase of the day, begun to *smoke* the bears. A traitorous

individual, a butcher by trade, had deposed before a rapturous assemblage in the parlour of the Light Horseman, that the bear slain on the first of February was a hoax, and that every pot of grease since sold by Mr. Chigwood had been obtained from a hog slaughtered by his own (the butcher's) hands. Why then did not Mr. Chigwood get rid of these costly and unprofitable animals? He had a reason for not doing so. It was a secret at present, known only to himself and Bildad. For Bildad, allured by the prospect of seeing life to any extent under the guardian wing of Mr. Chigwood, had gone over to the enemy's camp, and was even now plotting mischief against the unsuspecting Mr. Gattrell.

To accomplish his designs, a sum of ready money was urgently needed by the hairdresser. Where was this money to come from? He dared not apply to Miss Lucy Anerley. As for Donna Serafina, she was so inflexible, that he might as well ask the statue of King Charles the First, at Charing Cross, for a loan. He resolved upon laying siege to another person, and after carefully watching the house in York-street, St. James's, for several days, attained the opportunity he desired. He saw his fascinating wife quit the premises alone, and as soon as she had turned the corner of the street he boldly knocked at the door. Mrs. Norland received him with warmth, for she had not seen

him since they landed from Calcutta, owing to Serafina's jealous machinations; and now that she had openly quarrelled with her overbearing handmaiden, she felt that the little hairdresser might be a friend worth having. The following dialogue will be sufficient to show the nature of the conversation that took place between them.

"He appeals then to me," said Mrs. Norland, "to gain him his liberty?"

"Yes, madam," replied the hairdresser. "Mr. Loveridge said when I last visited his dungeon, 'That fair lady who has rescued Taswell, an utter stranger to her, will not see me suffer!'"

"Did he," exclaimed Mrs. Norland, speaking rapidly and colouring—"did he give you any reason why I should befriend him?"

"He gave none, madam," replied the unblushing barber.

The whole of Mr. Chigwood's statement was false. In the first place, Loveridge *had* disclosed in his hearing the story of his love for Harriet Petworth; in the second place, he *had not* sought release at her hands, or those of any other person. He remained in jail calmly and sternly awaiting the day of his trial.

Mrs. Norland seemed relieved at the barber's negative reply; she said, "I fear such poor influence as I could use would avail nothing. This man is a different being to Mr. Taswell. He is a

desperate fanatical revolutionist, and the Government are, I understand, resolved to bring him to trial. No," she continued, clasping her hands, "I see no prospect of aiding him, though I should rejoice to see him once more at liberty."

"Is there no other way, Mrs. Norland?" demanded the barber.

"I can discover none," replied the lady, with a sigh.

"Then I can, madam. It is simply a question of money. The turnkey in whose care Mr. Loveridge is placed is open to a bribe."

"But he will require an immense sum to induce him to risk his liberty, and possibly his life, in allowing so important a prisoner to escape."

"That is not my plan, madam. The turnkey will merely supply us with some valuable information."

"Of what nature?"

"You shall hear, madam. I have got a certain hold over him. By exposing his villanies and malpractices to the Right Honourable Mr. Fox, he would stand a good chance of losing his place. He knows this. He also knows that he will be well paid if he agrees to what I require. And his share in the affair gives him no risk whatever. He simply undertakes, as soon as he receives the order for Mr. Loveridge's removal to the Tower, to tell us of it. The transfer will take place by

night, secretly and without parade, for the Government don't want to raise a mob, or have to call out a regiment of soldiers. As soon as we get the news, we shall prepare for action."

"Is there no way of gaining this information beforehand?"

"I fear not, madam. I understand the warrant will be acted on as soon as issued."

"But surely the delay that will occur while he sends to inform you, will be fatal to your enterprise. Before you are ready to execute your plans, the prisoner will be securely lodged within the Tower-gates."

"I think not, Mrs. Norland. The turnkey will play into our hands, and officers are but men. He will contrive some plausible reason for delay which will ensure our arriving in time."

"Supposing the turnkey should after all play you false?"

"His avarice will prevent his doing so. My agreement with him is this. Ten guineas down, forty guineas payable by a responsible person as soon as the prisoner is at liberty. We shall require altogether a hundred guineas, madam. If you will advance sixty guineas now, and give your note of hand to the turnkey to pay the other forty as soon as the job is done, I will ensure you Mr. Loveridge's freedom."

Mrs. Norland remained for some moments in

silent meditation; her beautiful eyes were bent to the ground, her hands were pressed firmly together. At length she rose from her seat, and advancing towards the hairdresser, spoke thus:

"Mr. Chigwood, our acquaintance began several years ago. I knew you in India, where if not more happy than now, I at least possessed some station and influence. You will not take advantage of my present loneliness and weakness to deceive me? I once possessed, or thought I possessed, wealth. A hundred guineas then appeared a sum of little consequence, but affairs are changed now. If I can procure you this money, will you assure me that it shall be faithfully used in effecting the end for which I give it?"

"Madam," exclaimed the hairdresser, with impassioned earnestness, raising his hands as he spoke, "I swear solemnly by Heaven that on receipt of this money I will use my utmost endeavours to set Loveridge at liberty, and I believe, by the mercy of Providence, that I shall succeed."

Was the barber, when he spoke these words, a deliberate cold-blooded hypocrite? Not at all. He honestly wished to rescue Loveridge, and purposed to effect his release; he also wished to gather a round sum of money for a certain enterprise of his own. But he persuaded his sluggish conscience to keep this latter motive in the background, so that when he appealed to Heaven to

confirm his oath, he swore with perfect sincerity, and was so genuinely affected, that his hands trembled, and honest tears gathered in his eyes.

"Mrs. Norland," he said, "I would go all round the world to serve you. Loveridge is a friend of my own, a man whose opinions I respect, though I do not share them, therefore I earnestly desire his release; but, were he my greatest enemy, whose freedom would be the signal of my own downfal, still I would do your bidding."

Here Mr. Chigwood, it must be confessed, spoke hyperbolically, for such was the worthy gentleman's regard for his own person, that if, on coming out of jail, Loveridge had promised him a thrashing, he would have allowed the stern republican (so far as his own will went) to lie in durance vile for the remainder of his days.

"I believe you," said Mrs. Norland, calmly. "And now concerning this money. You know how your wife and I have supported existence since our coming to England?"

Mr. Chigwood smiled significantly, and dealt an imaginary pack of cards.

"Yes," she continued, emphatically, "such has been our vile, our disgraceful means of gaining a subsistence. Do not fancy that now I have got all I want, I am going to turn saint, and, having feathered my own nest, intend to preach to others

on the evils of gaming. Not so. From first to last I hated the abominable trade; but the pressure of necessity and Serafina's persuasive tongue——"

"Ah! she knows how to wheedle," remarked the barber, reflecting on his last interview with Mrs. Chigwood.

"Nor have our gains been large. Yonder little oaken box," said Mrs. Norland, pointing with a taper finger as she spoke, "contains all our possessions, I believe."

"*Our* possessions!" exclaimed Chigwood. "Surely yours, madam, only! Serafina is but a servant."

"In name she may be, but not in reality. She is the true mistress of this house. In proof of what I say," pursued Mrs. Norland, proceeding to the table whereon the coffer stood, "I cannot gain admittance to this box until Serafina returns. She keeps the key."

A pang of intense disappointment shot through the barber's heart. He turned pale with vexation. To be so near the goal, to have the prize almost within his grasp, and then, like Tantalus, to see it whisked out of his sight. He summoned up all the courage he could muster for the important emergency.

"Madam," he began, solemnly, "do you wish to release William Lancefield?"

"Lancefield!" replied the lady, starting back with a look of fear. "Who told you that was his name?"

Mr. Chigwood lost his presence of mind for a moment; at length he said, "The public prints, madam. Walter Loveridge, *alias* William Lancefield."

"True, true," murmured Mrs. Norland. "How foolishly nervous I am!" Yet she could not help thinking that the barber knew more concerning Loveridge's history than he cared to tell.

"If, madam, you wish to release this poor, suffering man, who, in all human probability, will go from the dock of the Old Bailey to exile for life among the savages of New Holland, you must act at once."

"What mean you?"

"You must give me the sixty guineas I ask for. If you wait till my wife returns, and ask her permission, she will not let a shilling escape her clutches. Mrs. Norland, you ought to know Serafina by this time; I know her also. I married her because she wearied me with her passionate love; she married me that she might brag among her tawny kinsfolk of her white husband. But, since we came to England, and she has, by using your loveliness (pardon the expression, Mrs. Norland), as a magnet of attraction, contrived to wriggle into fashionable life, she has treated me with scorn,

neglect, and contempt. We have three children, as you know. She looks upon them as a nuisance and an encumbrance. I have to act the part of both father and mother towards them; and, in spite of all my entreaties, she has refused to advance a sixpence towards their support. Think you this woman, Mrs. Norland, will open her strong-box to allow you to gratify the sentimental whim, as she will mockingly call it, of releasing a fellow-creature from fetters and darkness to restore him to light and liberty? Never, madam. Await her return, ask her beseechingly for the key, and William Lancefield, who still worships the memory of a certain fair maid of Kent, will, for aught I can do, perish on the scaffold, or linger out his days in chains and slavery at the other side of the world!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. Norland, becoming deadly pale, "then you know my secret?"

"I do, madam; but I shall keep it inviolate. Mrs. Norland, though you have known me merely as a valet and a hairdresser, I am a gentleman born. Though vulgarised and degraded from what I once was, I can keep my word."

"You have pleaded his cause eloquently," said Mrs. Norland. "What would you have me do?"

"Burst the lock of this coffer, and take the money," replied the barber.

"I shall be committing a felony."

"A felony! By no means. You are mistress of this house. It is your property."

"But Serafina considers she has a joint share."

"Then I am her lawfully wedded husband, and what belongs to her belongs to me. Let her choose which horn of the dilemma she pleases, as we used to say at Oxford. If the money be yours, do you break open the coffer. If the money be hers, I am prepared to do so. Do you agree, Mrs. Norland? Time is precious. At any moment she may return, and then the chance of success may be gone for ever."

"I agree," said Mrs. Norland, faintly.

The hairdresser seized the coffer, and pressing his hands horizontally in opposite directions, one against the lid, the other against the lower portion of the box, in a few seconds forced it open.

"It is but a common lock," he remarked. "There, madam," he said, handing the coffer to Mrs. Norland. "You can now give me what you will."

The lady counted the contents. "A hundred and twenty guineas," she said. "The losings of idle men and women of fashion at the faro-table. It is Satan's money. I sometimes wonder that the bread I eat derived from such an unhallowed source does not choke me. Better to bestow it in doing good to others. And yet," she murmured, shudderingly, "perhaps this vile money may carry

its contamination wherever it reaches. It may release him from prison, and he may live to rue the day when it gave him liberty."

"You need not fear that, madam. He is weary of politics, and as soon as he gains his freedom will return to America, where he has a republic ready made to his hands."

"You think so? Then take the money, and God speed you in your endeavours to rescue him." She counted the golden pieces as she said this into the barber's willing palm. "And, Mr. Chigwood, one word before you leave. There is already ill-will between myself and Serafina. This deed," she said, laying her hand on the open coffer, "will cause open hatred, and possibly separation. Be it so. I am prepared for the worst."

As the barber hurried from the house, he saw a veiled figure coming along the street, which he knew to be that of his fascinating wife. He fled with the utmost precipitation.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SPORTING HERMIT.

"Do you want to catch the rheumatics, lameness of the hip-joint, or a stoppage in the lungs, young gentleman, that you lie here on the damp turf after a February thaw?"

Arthur Taswell rubbed his eyes sleepily, and languidly raised himself to his feet. He beheld before him a hale old man of sixty, whose bronzed features, wiry figure, and upright bearing, betokened one who had in his day worn weapons and served in the wars. He carried a wallet in his hand, from the mouth of which protruded the leaves and roots of sundry plants.

"Pardon me if I have done wrong," replied the young man, calmly; "but I have walked from Rochester, and being unused of late to such excursions, I felt languid and weary."

"You are a Londoner?"

"How do you guess that?"

"'Tis easily discovered. The cut of your dress, the elegance of your boots, the delicacy of your complexion prove it. I have been among the North American Indians, and am accustomed to look keenly at these outward tokens. But I perceive you are still weary," continued the old man, observing that Taswell flagged and halted in his pace. "Come and rest in my cottage. It is but a poor place, and I have little to set before you, but to that little you are welcome."

"Are you wont to entertain strangers unawares in this way, sir?" asked Taswell.

"Seldom enough, as the Snodland folks will tell you, an you ask them. They call me a griping, miserly hunks. But I took a fancy to your face as you lay under the tombstone, and as I but rarely speak to a human being, I thought I would give my tongue a bit of recreation."

The old man led the way down a country lane, covered with ruts of such a magnitude as no parish in England can show in these degenerate days; ruts three and four feet deep, filled to the brim with liquid mud. Some feeble attempts had been made to improve the road by heaps of large stones cast in pell-mell, but these repairs frequently caused more injury than advantage, as a broken cart overturned by one of these artificial precipices testified.

"In America," observed the old soldier, "we use the forest to make the road, and would fill up these quagmires with good sound logs of hickory and maple. But in England they are chary of their wood. Yonder landlord would be loth to give his elms and oaks for the purpose. Now let us cross this piece of swamp land, and we shall soon reach my mansion."

The marshy soil did not improve the appearance of Taswell's top-boots, and he was not sorry when they arrived in front of a primitive-looking hut, built of wattle and dab. They were received with a loud chorus of barkings, and presently a pointer, a large water-spaniel, and a bull-mastiff surrounded them.

"Down, Wolfe—down!" shouted the old man, as the dogs gambolled around their master, or smelt growlingly and suspiciously at Taswell's person. "Back to your kennel, Montcalm. Lie there, Abraham."

"Quite a reminiscence of the old French war in Canada," remarked the young lawyer, as they entered the house.

"Why, yes; I like to keep up the memory of those days. I was in the battle myself, and saw the General not an hour before he got his death-wound."

The interior of the hut corresponded with the outside, being furnished in the rudest possible style.

A rough table, a couple of stools, a blanket, carefully rolled up military fashion, in a corner, a saucepan and a frying-pan, with a tin mug and plate, comprised the whole apparatus. A shelf, however, displayed an array of books such as few farmers possessed in those days, while on the wall hung a couple of guns; a light piece for field sports, and a heavy weapon for water-fowl.

"Ah! you may well look at the guns," said the old man, as he set before his guest some of the contents of the saucepan, which emitted a savoury odour, and, in truth, contained a skilfully concocted stew of wild duck and vegetables. "They earn the best part of my living. I pay the Squire six guineas a year for this useless bit of marsh, but then there's an understanding between us that I am to shoot what I please and where I please, provided I sell nothing. Besides that, I spend many a night on the Thames marshes in the winter, duck-shooting. This bit of ground behind the hut, which you observe is higher than the rest, and therefore tolerably dry, finds me in vegetables; and as for bread, why, I change the fish I catch with the farmers' wives for flour. Then there's my profession. I am a herb doctor, and cure more of the country folks with my simples than one of your London physicians could kill if he tried."

"Where do you sleep?" asked Taswell, gazing round the hut.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the old man. "You don't see any bed. I haven't slept in a bed for many a year. I just roll myself in my blanket. When it begins to get chilly, I know the day's dawning, and that it's time to rise."

"You have no friends?"

"Friends? That I have; well-tried, faithful friends. There they are on that shelf. John Milton, a blind man, but a wonderful eloquent talker; William Shakespeare, a fellow who can make you weep and laugh within half an hour; Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, who tell me all about London fashionable ways. Plenty more besides them. And now, young gentleman, I want to hear about yourself. I'm an inquisitive old fellow when I choose. You are neither an army nor a navy man. What do you do down in Chatham?"

"Perhaps I have come for change of air," answered the young lawyer, blinking the question. "I have been much confined of late."

"Wait till you have been in prison before you talk of confinement. I was once——"

"Excuse my interruption," said Taswell. "I am but just released from jail."

"You don't look like a thief!" exclaimed the old man, starting up, and eyeing his visitor suspiciously.

"No, not so bad as that," replied Taswell, with a smile. "I was falsely accused of sedition."

"By whom?"

"Nay, I will not disclose his name. But before long my vengeance shall fall upon his head."

"You mean to murder him?"

"No; to challenge him to fair and open combat."

"Come, that is manly and soldierlike. And why this spite on his part?"

"He and I love the same woman; and, alas! she prefers him to me."

"Ha! ha! the old story. And who got you out of prison?"

"A lady made influence with the Government. Her name I will tell, for she did a good action. It is Norland."

"Humph!" said the old man. "Some fashionable, high-born dame, I judge, who can make the ministers shake in their shoes."

"I know not the extent of her power, but she is, I understand, of humble origin. Her first lover, who is an ardent republican, came to see me in my cell, and was himself arrested."

"And what will become of him?"

"Alas! I fear he will be sent to Botany Bay."

"Never whimper over that, young man. Many an honest fellow's been sent there before him. Besides, 'tis a fine country. I have read Mr. Watkin Tench's account. There he stands on my shelf. Plenty of kangaroos and wild ducks. And is there no fine lady to get this poor fellow out of prison?"

"I fear not. The Government think him too important a captive."

"But sure this Mrs. Norland would do something to save her first lover?"

"'Tis hard to say. I hear she passionately loves another, the very man whom I hope to have the pleasure of challenging."

"Well, 'tis a strange mixed up affair. A. loves B., and B. doesn't love A., but loves C., who doesn't love B., but loves D. Mercy on us! I wouldn't give up my guns and dogs and books for all the women in Christendom.—Yes, there is one woman whom I should like to see again if she lives; that's my own dear child, my only daughter. Ten years ago she ran away with a villain, and nearly broke my tough old heart."

The old man sighed, and drew his rugged hand across his eyes.

"May I ask his name?"

"Ay, that may you, though I care little whether he be dead or alive. Squire Frederick Starlinghurst."

Arthur Taswell sprang from the stool on which he was sitting with such sudden violence as to alarm the old soldier.

"Are ye going mad?" shouted the old man, rapping out a military oath as he righted the fallen seat.

The young lawyer panted with excitement. "You are her father?" he cried.

"Her father? Whose father?" growled the old soldier. "A., B., C., or D.'s father? Hang me, there's such a heap of 'em, my brains are fairly puzzled."

"Harriet Norland's father."

"Harriet? That was her name, sure enough; but how came she by the name of Norland?"

"I know the story but imperfectly, as I had it from Walter Loveridge's lips."

"Loveridge! Who is he? I know no Loveridge."

"I beg pardon. Lancefield—William Lancefield."

"Ay, now you are nigher the mark," said the old man. "And do you tell me," he continued, becoming excited in his turn, "that William Lancefield is in jail?"

"He is."

"And that my Harriet is still living?"

"Listen; you shall hear all I know."

Taswell then related all the circumstances of which he was aware, and gradually convinced the incredulous old man that Mrs. Norland was his own daughter, Harriet Petworth.

He displayed in his rough eccentric fashion great emotion. "Heaven forgive me! It was my doing. I encouraged the young Squire, thinking that he was really bent on honourably marrying such a handsome well-taught wench as my Harry was; and I scorned William, because his father

was a poor broken-down old bankrupt. I never thought to hear of her again. When she ran off with the young Squire, I gave up schoolmastering, and wandered about the country like an old cadger, along with gipsies and such like. Then I happened on this place; I liked the lonely looks of it. Squire Marsden and I came to terms, and here I've lived, ever since, the life of a hermit. So Harriet still lives, and looks handsome? I had thought her end, like most of the rest, would have been rags, beggary, sickness, and the hospital. To that pass most of these fine young gentlemen bring their village sweethearts. Young man, I must see my girl again before I die!"

CHAPTER XVII.

OUTWITTING THE REDBREASTS.*

It was past ten o'clock, and a cloudy night; so the watchman said. Most of the inhabitants of St. Antholin's-court were preparing for bed; the landlord of the Light Horseman extinguished his new argand lamps, which were the admiration of his parlour-customers, and bade a leash of gallant volunteers, who had sung patriotic ballads till they were hoarse, good night. In Mr. Chigwood's establishment Plassey and Clive were fast asleep, locked in each other's dusky arms, but the rest of the family were wide awake. Warren Hastings, with the pertinacity peculiar to babies, was especially lively, persisting in crowing and pulling Bildad's hair, as that youth vainly endeavoured to hush him to sleep with the "Réveil du Peuple," the new republican air just imported from France. Bil-

* Cant term applied to the Bow-street runners, on account of the colour of their uniform.

dad's attitude was picturesque. Seated carelessly on the table, with his hat cocked on one side, his legs dangling before him, and the baby in his arms, he was having his boots blacked by the humble-minded Sam. He expected to be up all night, and wished to look as genteel as possible. Mr. Chigwood sat by the fire, sucking unconsciously at an empty pipe. His brow was bent, and his bearing nervous and disturbed as he kept glancing eagerly at the door. Presently Bildad examined his boots, and approving of their brilliancy, graciously permitted his brother-apprentice to retire to bed.

"He don't know nothing about it?" remarked Bildad, interrogatively, as soon as Sam had retired.

"Who?" exclaimed Mr. Chigwood, starting as if from a reverie.

"Sam."

"Certainly not. When the time for action comes, I shall send him out on a message, unless we do it by night."

"The properiator of the carawan says he's ready at ten minutes' notice, night and day."

"How shall we get up the bears?"

"Sling 'em up, cage and all, with a tackle. That's what the properiator adwises."

"I shan't leave a stick in the house for old Gattrell. If we can manage it, bedsteads and all shall go."

"Ay, let's make a clean sweep," answered Bildad. "If you shoot the moon at all, hit her right in the bull's-eye."

"All now depends on the turnkey. As soon as he gives us notice, and we get Loveridge out of trouble, we'll set about our own departure. They're sure to remove him by night."

"About the small hours, Mr. Wrench hinted," observed the apprentice. "Hush! there's a knock at the door. There they are."

Bildad unlocked the street-door, and admitted, to his astonishment, Mr. Gattrell and another old gentleman. The second old gentleman was short, stout, and Dutch-built.

"Come along, Mr. Pead," shouted Mr. Gattrell. "Don't be afraid. They won't eat you. Come along, sir. So, James Chigwood," he continued, confronting his tenant, "you're surprised to see me at this time of night, ain't you?"

The old gentleman's manner was extremely excited; his face, especially his nose, was preternaturally red; his utterance was unusually thick. The fact was, he had been imbibing glass after glass at the Antigallican, dilating on his wrongs to Mr. Pead, till nature could bear it no longer; so he had resolved to burst upon his debtor like a clap of thunder, and have the matter settled there and then.

"Surprised, Mr. Gattrell?" replied Chigwood.

"Not at all. I'm an old traveller, you know, an nothing surprises me. Charmed to see you and your friend. Take a seat, gentlemen." The wily hairdresser winked significantly at Bildad, who immediately placed a square green bottle of Schiedam and clean glasses on the table.

"I'm come to put an end to this, James Chigwood," exclaimed Mr. Gattrell, "now and for ever. You've deceived me right and left. You've sold my goods under cost price. You've lost all my old customers. You've turned my respectable shop into a den of sedition, han't he, Mr. Pead?"

"Well, sir, so it appears," observed Mr. Pead, quietly.

"And now I've come to have satisfaction, han't I, Mr. Pead?"

"Yes, sir," remarked Mr. Pead, sinking into a chair.

"I therefore demand a bill of sale of everything on the premises, bears and all," said Mr. Gattrell, with stern solemnity.

"You shall have it with pleasure, sir," replied Mr. Chigwood, calmly. "Bildad, fetch the pen and ink, and a sheet of foolscap. And sit down, Mr. Gattrell, mix a glass, and make yourself comfortable."

"I'll sit down, sir," returned the old gentleman, severely, "because I'm an elderly man, but I'll drink nothing in your house."

"*You* won't refuse a drop of Hollands, Mr. Pead, I hope?" said Mr. Chigwood, pleasantly.

"Well, sir," murmured Mr. Pead, coquettishly, with a timid look at his friend.

"I won't stand in your light, sir," remarked Mr. Gattrell, magnanimously. "He han't done you the injury he has me, Mr. Pead."

In a few seconds a steaming glass, well sugared, and delicately flavoured with a slice of lemon, stood at Mr. Pead's elbow.

"Excuse me a few moments, Mr. Gattrell," said the hairdresser. "I must go and prepare this document. Bildad, I shall want your assistance."

The two confederates retired from the room. After the lapse of twenty minutes, Mr. Chigwood whispered to his apprentice:

"Bildad, peep through the keyhole again, and tell me what you see."

Bildad took an accurate survey of the scene, and replied:

"Little Fatty's mixing his third tumbler; old Nosey has begun his second."

"He'll do," remarked the hairdresser, rubbing his hands. He presently re-entered the room. Mr. Gattrell held out his hand, and spoke thus, articulating with extreme difficulty:

"Jemmy, shake hands. I've been too hard upon you. Never mind billshale. Put billshale

back of fire. Here's success to trade!" And he drained his glass.

"Ah! that's how things should be," chimed in Mr. Pead. "Peace and quietness is my motto."

"I'm delighted to make your acquaintance, sir," said Chigwood, grasping his hand.

"And I'm pleased to have effected a reconciliation," returned Mr. Pead.

"You'll take care of him, won't you; he ain't fit to travel?" said the little old gentleman, pointing to Mr. Gattrell, who, after his last effort of eloquence, had fallen fast asleep with his mouth open.

"If he was my own wife, I could not take greater care of him," responded Chigwood, enigmatically.

"Then I'll wish you a good night, sir. I go past Bunhill-row, and I'll let his mistress know he's in good hands."

Mr. Pead departed, and Warren Hastings, to the joy of his father and his nurse, went to sleep. Mr. Gattrell continued to slumber peacefully, and Bildad, anxious to promote the old gentleman's comfort, placed his legs on a second chair. There was another knock at the door.

"Mrs. Wrench," said Bildad.

"Take her into the front shop."

"I've had such a run," said that lady, as she undid her cloak, and unfastened the strings of her hat, disclosing thereby a buxom face and figure, "and it's lonely at this time in the streets; but I

would do anything to save that poor man. He ain't such a pretty little fellow as Mr. Taswell. Wrench and me was nearly having words over *him;* but he's so quiet, so sad, and so stern, just like a picter in 'Fox's Book of Martyrs.' Well, they've come to fetch him."

"Who?" asked Chigwood.

"Mr. Yapp and Mr. Bletcher, the Bow-street gentlemen."

"How soon do they mean to start?"

"Not afore one in the morning. They want to have the town all a-bed."

"We shall have two powerful determined men to master," said Mr. Chigwood, meditatively. "I don't like the looks of the job."

"Let alone the hackney-coachman," added Bildad.

"*He's* all right," said Mrs. Wrench. "Yapp and the t'other officer don't know it, but he's a friend of mine."

"How did you manage that?"

"Soon after they arrived I slipped out, and said to the coachman, 'If it's all the same to you, a friend of mine wants to drive, and here's five shillings over and above your fare.' He knew I was the jailer's wife, so he took the hint and my money. I explained to Mr. Yapp that the coachman was took bad in his throat with a sort of quinsy. He growled a bit, and bade me get

another driver. He's got my brother-in-law now, Ned Rodgers, with his mare Black Nelly in the shafts."

"And how will Black Nelly serve us?"

"Like a good 'un, Mr. Chigwood. You see, Ned bought her cheap, out of a gentleman's phēaton; she was such a kicker. She's all right so long as she don't feel the whip. Touch her with that, and she'll stand still and kick till somebody jumps down and goes to her head."

The company sat silent for some minutes; Bildad and Mr. Chigwood were evidently immersed in deep cogitation. At last Bildad arose and whispered to his master.

"Ay, if it could be done," replied he. "I abhor bloodshed and violence."

"It 'ud be a rare game, wouldn't it?" grinned Bildad. "And serve him right too, for bothering us at this time of night."

"What sort of humour are the officers in, Mrs. Wrench?" asked Chigwood.

"Very grumpy at first," returned the lady. "I mixed a glass of sperrits for my master, and offered them some. They swore they wouldn't touch a drop. Then Bletcher—he likes his glass as well as any man—he gets his nose to the tumbler. 'It smells good, Yapp,' says he, 'don't it?' 'Quite flagrant,' says Mr. Yapp; 'but you don't have me.' 'Well, I'll take a thimble-full for luck,' says Bletcher. 'Law, Mrs. Wrench,' says he, when he'd

drunk it, 'how you do mix it. My old woman can't come nigh you.' So I mixed him another. 'Dash my wig,' says Yapp, 'if I can sit by scenting two other folks's liquor, and stay dry-lipped myself.' So he had one. And now they're as jolly as sand-boys——"

"Drunk?" asked Mr. Chigwood.

"Why, no. They're seasoned vessels. I don't suppose them two was ever drunk in their lives. See the lot of liquor they has to swallow in the way of business when they're thief-catching, and such like. But they're comfortable. And talkative. They let out something."

"What was that?"

"Why, that Mr. Pitt had been heard to say that he wished Loveridge was off his hands, and safe on his way to Amerikey. 'It makes an officer,' said Mr. Yapp, 'unsartain how to act. Still, we've got to do our dooty. We've got to deliver a prisoner to the High Constable of the Tower, and deliver him we shall.'"

Mr. Chigwood now disclosed to Mrs. Wrench the plan of action suggested by Bildad. The lady listened and approved, amid much laughter.

"They won't refuse, if you ask 'em, Mrs. Wrench, to call here for a change of clothes for the prisoner —eh?" demanded Mr. Chigwood.

"They're in such good-humour," said the turn-key's wife, "that I believe they'll do anything I ask them."

"You'll instruct Loveridge how to act. Of course you'll see him?"

"In course. I shall slip up to wish him good-bye."

"And bid him be silent in the coach."

"Ay, ay. Now I must be going. Yapp thinks I'm gone to see a friend who's just expecting her fourth. Dear, dear, I wish it was my case," remarked Mrs. Wrench, with a sigh.

"I thought you had a family," observed Chigwood. "I remarked when I was at the prison that you and your husband called each other father and mother."

"Ah! we had one once, and got into the habit then. She died at eighteen months old, and Wrench and me keeps up that way of talking in hopes of another."

With this little piece of sentiment, Mrs. Wrench took her departure.

In two hours' time the rattle of wheels, so anxiously expected, was heard, and a hackney-coach drew up at the end of the court.

"Now then, my lad, out with you," exclaimed Mr. Yapp, opening the door, and letting down the steps, "if you want to see Chigwood again, and get your clothes."

"Quick's the word, and sharp's the action," said Mr. Bletcher, briskly. "He's a silent cove," he muttered. "Never spoke a word all the way."

The officers each took an arm of the prisoner's, and escorted him to the barber's private door.

They had plied the knocker several times without attracting any attention, when at length the fastenings of the shop-door were slowly undone, and a nightcapped head was cautiously protruded. A sleepy voice demanded what in the name of patience people wanted at that hour of the night.

"Friend of yours," said Mr. Yapp, "called fo some clean linen."

"Name?" demanded Chigwood.

"Loveridge, *alias* Lancefield."

"Bless me!" exclaimed the barber, throwing open the door. "Is he set at liberty?"

"Not exactly, Master Soapsuds," said Mr. Bletcher, who was inclined to be jocose, "seeing as he's between two Bow-street officers."

"He's come to say good-bye, that's the long and short of it," growled Mr. Yapp, sulkily, irritated at the barber's delay.

"I wish he'd come at a more seasonable hour," muttered Mr. Chigwood, with a great yawn, as he ushered the officers and their prisoner into the shop. He then took Loveridge by the hand, and asked him a few common-place questions, to which the republican answered with the utmost brevity.

Meanwhile the two officers conferred apart.

"He don't seem over glad to see him."

"No wonder. There's no likeness between 'em. This one's a regular game cock, t'other's a cowardly devil, as would give in if you cried 'Bo' in his ear."

"No fear of a rescue, is there?"

"I should say not. Besides, we've got our barkers. And not a soul knew when the warrant would be executed, until it was put in my hand."

"Bildad! hey, Bildad!" called the barber, opening the inner door.

A voice, apparently smothered by blankets, answered, "Yes, master?"

"Get up at once, and find Mr. Loveridge's clothes; I'm sure I don't know where they are."

Mr. Chigwood then went to a cupboard, and producing his bottle of Hollands, placed it on the table.

"You'll take a parting glass, Mr. Loveridge?" he said.

The prisoner shook his head.

"Nonsense, man; you'll want comfort where you're going."

"I have bound myself by an oath to abstain from strong drink."

"Well I never! Did ye hear that, Yapp?" demanded Mr. Bletcher.

"Ay," replied Mr. Yapp, contemptuously; "he's more fit for Bedlam than the Tower."

"You never ask us to have a drop, Mr. Shaver," observed Mr. Bletcher, glancing tenderly at the square bottle.

"Didn't I, gentlemen? I beg your pardon," said the hairdresser, starting as if from a reverie, and passing the bottle across the table.

"I jest want a taste out of curosity," said Mr. Bletcher, "to see if it's the same Hollands as my old uncle used to bring over from Flushing. No it ain't," he continued, smacking his lips, and pouring out a second glass. "It's more sugary and more smoky."

"Curse me, Bletcher," exclaimed Mr. Yapp, "if you han't always got some mealy-mouthed excuse for your drink. Now I'm downright and upstraight, and I'll have a glass because I like it."

Mr. Chigwood had by this time made the kettle boil, so that Mr. Bletcher took a third glass in honour of the hot water.

"Excuse me a few minutes, Mr. Officer," said the hairdresser to Mr. Yapp, "but I must go and look after that boy." He quitted the room, leaving the two officers seated at the table merrily enjoying their liquor, while Loveridge sat silently by the fire, apparently buried in the deepest thought.

"That sounded like the street-door," exclaimed Mr. Yapp, putting his hand to his ear.

"Street-door be d——d," replied Mr. Bletcher, stretching his legs luxuriously. "I tell you what, Yapp," he continued, being irritated at his brother officer's sarcasm, "it's my opinion you're getting deaf."

"What?" shouted Yapp.

"There—there's a proof of what I say. You don't know what I said then. Iv'e remarked it

often lately afore their worships. If it gets worse, Yapp, you'll be supperannivated."

"You go to Bath and cry brooms!" replied Mr. Yapp. "Come, let's be off out of this. You won't be able to stand presently."

Here Mr. Chigwood returned, accompanied by Bildad carrying a small parcel. Although small, it must have been packed preternaturally tight, for both the hairdresser and his apprentice were out of breath with the exertion.

"Well, good-bye, my friend," said Mr. Chigwood, solemnly shaking Loveridge's hand. "If we are not permitted to meet again in this world, I trust we may meet in——"

"Botany Bay," quoth Mr. Yapp, brutally. "There, come along; we've wasted too much time already."

"Poor gentleman," murmured Bildad, bursting into a sham fit of weeping; "maybe the next time I sees him will be on the scaffold, without e'er a head!"

The officers proceeded arm in arm with the prisoner to the entrance of St. Antholin's-court, where the hackney-coach was ready waiting.

"There's one of the evils of dilly-dallying," grumbled Mr. Yapp. "That street-lamp has gone out. Cuss the contractors."

"They only finds ile for half the night. All honest folks is supposed to be a-bed by two in the

morning," returned Mr. Bletcher. "Why, coachy, where are ye? It's dark enough to make Old Nick tread upon his own tail if he's abroad. Where are ye?"

"Here, sir," replied Ned Rodgers.

"Why ain't your lamps lit, sir?" demanded Mr. Yapp, sternly.

"I thought it better not, your honour," replied the coachman, leaning over from his box, and speaking in a low, confidential voice. "Lamps draws attention. When I removed a pollyitical prisoner last year, your honour, I was instructed to douse my glims."

"Well, maybe you're right," said Mr. Yapp, mollified by the driver's obsequious tone. "Now, Bletcher, you go to t'other side of the coach for fear of accidents, just as I open the door."

Mr. Bletcher did as he was ordered, while his brother officer let down the steps and assisted Loveridge, who was fettered hand and foot, into the vehicle. He had just got his own foot on the step, when Black Nelly began kicking in the most furious manner.

"Run to her head, for God's sake!" shouted Ned Rodgers, "or she'll kick the coach to splinters." The suddenness of the shock had thrown Mr. Yapp off his balance as he stood upon the step. He measured his length on the ground, and narrowly missed having the wheels across his ancle. Mean-

while, Bletcher ran to the mare and seized her by the head.

"Who opened that other door?" exclaimed Mr. Yapp, as he staggered to his feet. "I heard it as plain as——"

Here the mare, which had ceased kicking as soon as Bletcher took her head, began to plunge again. Ned Rodgers had perhaps accidentally touched her with the whip. After some minutes she became quiet. The two officers returned, and took up their positions at opposite windows of the coach.

"What's that you said about open doors?" asked Mr. Bletcher, speaking across the inside of the vehicle.

"I heard that door open."

"Well, it is open, but the kicking done that. These crazy old doors fly open at a touch. Here he is, at any rate, all right enough, eh, Mr. Loveridge?" said Mr. Bletcher, touching the occupant of the coach on the shoulder.

The prisoner replied with a sound which resembled a snore and a groan combined together.

"Blest if he ben't asleep," said Mr. Bletcher. "I dare say he finds it soft lying after Wrench's straw mattresses, hey, Yapp?"

"Hold your jaw, and jump in," quoth Mr. Yapp. "Now, coachman, drive along, and stop for nothing till you reach the Tower gates. Here we are at last," cried Mr. Yapp, with a sigh of

relief, as the vehicle, after rattling over drawbridges and threading gateways, drew up at the buildings destined for political delinquents.

"I never see such a man to sleep," observed Mr. Bletcher. "And ain't he heavy when he sleeps! Lor, he feels quite cushiony."

"What officers are these in charge?" said a sharp, brisk voice.

"That's our inspector," remarked Mr. Yapp. "Yapp and Bletcher, sir."

"Jump down at once; hand me your warrant. I want you both for a matter at the other end of the town. Plenty of us here to look after the prisoner."

The inspector took the officers aside, and conferred with them for some minutes in the guard-room. Meanwhile, the other officials present removed the prisoner from the hackney-coach.

"Never mind the coach," said the inspector. "Go at once by water. Take a boat at the Tower stairs. You'll have a strong tide up——"

In a few moments the officers hurried away on their fresh errand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ROAD-BOOK.

SOME days previous to the events just narrated, another interview had taken place between Donna Serafina da Silva and Sir Goodwin Anerley, during which she had informed the credulous Baronet that Mrs. Norland was still, by proper management, to be wooed and won; that she had grown tired of the gaming-table, and longed to be placed in such a position of dignity and respectability as she would gain by becoming Sir Goodwin's bride. There were two obstacles to encounter. There was the possibility of Major Norland appearing to claim his deserted wife. This difficulty Serafina promised to overcome. She pointed out that the Major, if living, was a needy man, who had lost his character, and was even now under the ban of the law. His voice could be easily silenced by the application of a bribe. The second obstacle

was Mrs. Norland's extraordinary preference for Frederick Starlinghurst. Serafina doubted whether his marriage with Floretta would cureher mistress's infatuated passion. She feared that it would rather tend to estrange her entirely from Sir Goodwin. The question, then, for the Baronet to decide was, "which marriage he would prefer giving up; his own or his daughter's?"

"My girl's, most decidedly," replied Sir Goodwin. "She is young, and may have plenty of offers from better men than Frederick Starlinghurst. I cannot afford to wait. But what do you propose to do?"

"Poor Miss Floretta!" observed Serafina. "She will have lost two possible husbands. By the way, I hear that her first lover is released from prison."

"He is."

"What do you suppose are his sentiments towards Mr. Starlinghurst?"

"Anything but friendly. My daughters fear they will fight if they come in contact."

"Supposing they did fight?"

"I should feel deeply grieved."

"Really and truly, Sir Goodwin?"

"Certainly. One of them might be killed."

"Mr. Taswell, for example?"

"Ah! I should not care much for him."

"Mr. Starlinghurst?"

"That would be a sad blow."

"Not if it paved the way for your marriage with Amanda?"

"Good God! Mrs. Chigwood," exclaimed the Baronet, "with what horrible coolness you talk! Do you suppose I could be happy in a marriage cemented with the blood of my own intended son-in-law?"

"Certainly not, if you had premeditated and arranged the whole affair. But supposing this hostile meeting happens, whether you will or no? Mr. Taswell is smarting under the disappointment of seeing his lady-love appropriated by another. Mr. Starlinghurst is a man of high courage, a gentleman, who will not brook an insult. Supposing you cannot hinder their fighting?"

"I must then resign the event to the decrees of Providence, as my respected friend Miss Thrupp would say."

"And if Providence should decree that the duel resulted in your wedding Amanda?"

"I should accept the decision with becoming resignation. But what are you driving at in this cross-examination, Serafina?"

"I have a little plot in my head. Mr. Starlinghurst is a skilful swordsman. The other is a mere cit, utterly unacquainted, as I have heard you say, with the science of *carte* and *tierce*."

"Well?"

"Supposing they were to meet, and your intended son-in-law were to give this young lawyer

a nice little wound (I don't desire to put anybody to death, Sir Goodwin), could we not make Mr. Starlinghurst believe that he had killed his adversary, and terrify him into quitting the country for a few months? I could easily persuade Mrs. Norland that he was banished for ever, and she would be only too glad to take refuge from her grief in your arms."

"Vice is a creature of such hideous mien, &c. &c.," murmured Sir Goodwin, as he gazed askance at the dark but handsome face of his visitor. "But seen too oft," he continued, "we pity and embrace. Mrs. Chigwood, as they say at the playhouse, 'Temptress, I bid thee avaunt!' I don't like this scheme. It is too tortuous and Asiatic for plain English folks."

"Then we will say no more of it," rejoined Serafina, carelessly. "Besides, even if I wished, I could not execute it. Taswell has disappeared from view since he came out of prison, and although my husband knows whither he has gone, he refuses to tell me. He hinted that your daughter, Miss Lucy, desired his place of abode to be kept secret."

"Did she?" exclaimed the Baronet, "the minx! We shall presently have her falling in love with this poverty-ridden Jacobin. Do not leave the room, Serafina; I shall return presently."

Sir Goodwin quitted the apartment for the purpose of questioning his daughter. On the stairs

he encountered the footman, bearing a letter on his tray.

"For me?" he asked.

"No, your honour; for Miss Lucy."

The Baronet examined the letter, and recognised Taswell's handwriting.

"I will give Miss Lucy this letter," he said, quietly.

As soon as the footman had retired he looked at the post-mark.

"Rochester," he muttered. "There's a divinity or a devilry (which is it?) that shapes our ends. Shall I disclose this to yonder black temptress, or not?"

Meanwhile Serafina was engaged in anxious meditation.

"Sir Goodwin has given me a bond for five thousand pounds, payable the day he marries Harriet Norland. That is a prize worth striving for. What if I do tread down one or two people in my path? I must discover Taswell, and bring about a meeting between him and Starlinghurst. Well, Sir Goodwin, any news?" she said, carelessly, as the Baronet re-entered the room. "Your countenance beams with an expression of satisfaction."

"I have discovered where this young scapegrace has hidden himself."

"Indeed!" remarked Serafina, indifferently.

"Are you not burning to know?"

"I, Sir Goodwin? Not at all. I thought to do you a service; you disapproved of my plan; that is sufficient. I presume I may now retire, unless your honour has any further commands?"

"Stay one moment. Here is a letter from him. Would you not like to see the post-mark?"

"Not I, Sir Goodwin."

"It begins and ends with the letter R."

"I care not, sir. I will wish you a good day, Sir Goodwin." And, with a formal curtsey, Donna Serafina gathered up her skirts and left the house.

"She is offended," said Sir Goodwin, musing. "I was in a terrible strait—I knew not what to do. I could not bid her go and foment a quarrel between these two men. The death of one of them might lie at my door. Yet I was sorely tempted. If Frederick could but be removed without injury to himself for a season, and the nuptial bond binding myself and that beloved woman tied meanwhile!"

Serafina hurried home, and spent an hour poring over the pages of a road-book. She then proceeded to St. Antholin's-court, and dispensing threepennyworth of bulls'-eyes among her children (an unwonted treat, which nearly softened her husband to tears), said:

"Why, what a fuss you made, dear Jemmy, about keeping Taswell's abode a secret. He has gone down into Kent."

Mr. Chigwood started and turned pale. "The Government are not after him, I hope?" he asked.

"On a political mission, I suppose?" remarked Serafina, divining her husband's reasons for alarm.

"Why, yes."

"To Rochester?"

"Who told you?"

"A little bird. But no matter, I only wanted to show you you could not keep a secret from me. Kiss the three darlings for me; I must be away to York-street again."

Mrs. Chigwood did not go back to York-street. She took a seat in the coach for Rochester, and arrived there after nine hours' travelling, for the Dover-road was in good condition compared to many other highways. She soon discovered Love-lane, and presented herself at the door just as Arthur Taswell was about to refresh himself with a cup of tea after his political labours.

"There is a lady below, elegantly dressed and closely veiled, who wishes to see you, sir," said his buxom hostess as she entered the room.

"Did she tell you her name?" asked the young man.

"No; she only said she wished to see Mr. Taswell on important business."

"Bid her walk up," said Arthur, whose heart beat swiftly at the unwonted announcement. "Who could she be?" he thought. "Possibly a mes-

senger from Floretta, beseeching forgiveness and reconciliation?"

"You are Mr. Arthur Taswell," said his visitor in a musical voice, slightly foreign in its accent.

"I am," replied Arthur, handing the lady a chair. "May I, in return, ask your name, and the nature of your business?"

"Excuse my disclosing the former, or even raising my veil. I wish to remain incognito. My business you shall hear at once. You are a disappointed man. You have lost your fortune and your sweetheart."

"Alas, 'tis too true."

"Who is to blame for these misfortunes?"

"For the one, a foolish old uncle; for the other, a heartless man of fashion."

"In another month he will marry your Floretta. His father has agreed to the match, and he has just returned to London in triumph."

"'Tis hard to control one's passions under such an injury," said Taswell, setting his teeth together, "and yet I would sooner leave Heaven to punish his iniquities. A few days since I had thought to challenge him to fight me, but I have changed my intentions. It would be, after all, but a barren revenge to kill him. Floretta would not accept me with the blood of her lover on my hands. But pardon me, madam, you have not yet disclosed the object of your visit?"

"Revenge!" exclaimed the lady, rising from her seat, and using the most impassioned gestures. "I come to you, a fellow-sufferer from this man's villany, to entreat you to stop his career of prosperous wickedness. I," continued the lady, dropping her voice, and speaking in a tone of heart-broken grief—"I listened to his honeyed words, and I became his victim."

Serafina played her part in this scene with great prudence and dexterity. She took good care that no portion of her dark skin should be visible, for she was not sure but that Taswell might have heard of her existence, through her gossiping husband, or some other source; nor did she think her colour would add to the force of her pleading. She wished to play the *rôle* of some unknown lady who had fallen into Starlinghurst's snare, and she judged that her supposed beauty, rendered more *piquant* by its entire concealment, would induce Taswell—a susceptible and sentimental youth—to enter the lists in her favour. But the young man's reply disclosed a secret which she had often longed to unravel, but which her usually-confiding mistress had hitherto kept locked in her own bosom. This discovery gave a new direction to her unhallowed schemes.

"You are Mrs. Norland," he said. "I know your sad story well. I know how this villain lured you from the path of innocence, and then basely

deserted you. And it is to your benevolent heart, madam, that I owe my present liberty. Permit me to kiss your hand."

Serafina was so astounded at these words, that for some moments she was unable to speak. She mechanically surrendered her hand to the young man, who little knew the tint of the skin beneath the delicate glove which he kissed with such enthusiasm.

"Who disclosed to you my sad story?" she said, at length.

"Your first lover, William Lancefield, otherwise Walter Loveridge. I have also, madam, lately discovered your father."

"My father!" exclaimed Serafina. "Who is he, I wonder?" she muttered aside. "Tell me, oh tell me, where he is to be found!"

The unsuspecting young man narrated his adventures at the village of Snodland. His visitor listened with the utmost attention, and made mental notes of every point in his story.

"But pardon me, Mrs. Norland, I have heard that you still love this Mr. Starlinghurst passionately. Is it true, or do you actually desire to be revenged on him?"

Serafina paused for some minutes, and remained in deep reflection. She was uncertain how to act. The discovery of the real cause of Harriet Norland's attachment to Starlinghurst had diverted the stream

of her tortuous contrivances into a fresh channel. What if this father, whose miserly and eccentric character she had elicited from Taswell, could be persuaded to use his paternal influence, and urge his daughter's marriage with Sir Goodwin? Yet, on the other hand, his power might be utterly unavailing. Was it likely that a woman of nearly thirty, who had for ten years been independent of his control, who had during that interval mixed in the society of ladies and gentlemen, would submit to dictation from a low-born repulsive old man, who lived the life of a hermit? Her best plan, she thought, would be to try both schemes. To allow the duel to take place, but at the same time to have an interview with the recluse of Snodland. Consequently, she replied in these terms:

"Passionate love and intense hatred, Mr. Taswell, are closely allied together. Mr. Starlinghurst can make but one recompense for all the evil he has done me. He can marry me. That he has hitherto steadfastly refused to do; and now, for the sake of fortune, and fortune alone, he is about to ally himself with Miss Anerley. The match will ensure her a life of unhappiness, while you and I will drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs. Can you do nothing to save three human beings—yourself, your sweetheart, and me—from misery? You profess gratitude, Mr. Taswell, for the humble service I have rendered you. Will you not repay it by

seeking Frederick Starlinghurst, and compelling him to render me the justice which it is my right to claim?"

"Madam, I will do your bidding. Pardon me the liberty I am about to take. May I ask for one sight of that face, of whose loveliness I have so often heard? It will inspire me with fresh enthusiasm for the enterprise."

"Another time, dear Mr. Taswell," replied Serafina, in some alarm. "At present permit me to retain my incognito. Farewell," she said, extending her hand.

The young man once more kissed her glove with respectful enthusiasm, and accompanied his visitor to the door. She refused any further escort, and soon disappeared from his view.

CHAPTER XIX.

IGNOMINY.

Mr. Frederick Starlinghurst was going through a very delicate operation—an operation scarcely to be named to ears polite. Aided by Purkess his faithful valet, and a couple of zealous tailors, he was engaged in the arduous task of trying on sundry nether integuments. And this was a far more difficult process seventy years ago than it is now. In the present day, a gentleman slips as easily into those necessary garments as into a sack. But at the epoch when buckskins were worn, it was far otherwise. The slightest appearance of bagging, the faintest trace of crease, was fatal to the reputation of a dandy. And when does a man wish to look well, if not when he is going to be married? Mr. Starlinghurst was essaying the fit of his hymeneal clothing, and his anxiety was

naturally great. Several pairs of buckskins lay ignominiously on the floor. He had actually been able to enter them unassisted. They were accordingly rejected with contempt. He had now got into a pair which had cost him some trouble. By the aid of an apparatus of straps suspended from the ceiling, and the united exertions of his trio of attendants, he had slowly but surely found his way downwards. We may conceive his sensations in these degenerate easy-fitting times, by imagining that our whole body was a hand, and that we had just succeeded in buttoning a most accurately tight kid glove.

The tailors gave vent to their feelings in expressions of subdued and respectful admiration. Mr. Purkess, according to his wont, remained silent; but as his eye met his master's, he looked approvingly. This was sufficient; the tradespeople were dismissed, and Mr. Starlinghurst resumed his normal attire.

The dandy was in tolerable spirits, and inclined, with a few exceptions, to be good-humoured with all mankind. He had paid a successful visit to Starling Hall; his father had approved of the match with Floretta; his creditors, foreseeing a speedy liquidation of all their claims, no longer pestered him with bills delivered, but rather sought obsequiously to solicit further custom. In a month's time he hoped to be united to Floretta Anerley.

She was a pretty and vivacious girl; and though he did not love her much, she loved him, which would answer the purpose quite as well. In any case, he should have great pleasure in paying his debts with a portion of Sir Goodwin's dowry; the balance, he calculated, might keep himself and bride in tolerable comfort until the old squire thought fit to depart from a world in which he had spent an undue portion of time. He longed to get the marriage ceremony over. The family in Bedford-square were not remarkably cordial in their manner to him; Lucy was positively uncivil. Then there was Harriet Norland, perpetually worrying him with her sad, beseeching looks; a species of mute eloquence far more annoying than angry, reproachful words. He had latterly dropped her acquaintance. On his return from the country he found that she had become disagreeably proper and virtuous; she had closed the faro-table, and shut the door almost rudely in the faces of her fashionable acquaintance. Donna Serafina had tried to console him with the idea that it was only a passing whim, which would soon vanish away, and that after his marriage he would find the lady as of yore, presiding at the Board of Green Cloth, and amiably willing to win his or anybody else's money; but he was not to be so easily comforted. He began to think Harriet would give him serious annoyance, and he fervently wished that Serafina would fulfil

her oft-repeated promises, and either marry her off to somebody, or restore the long-lost Major to life.

As a parti-coloured web of reflection, in which cheerfulness and despondency were equally intermingled, was thus being woven in his brain, Mr. Purkess entered the room and handed to his master a scrap of paper, on which the following words were hastily pencilled: "Mr. Arthur Taswell desires to see Mr. Starlinghurst on a matter of the utmost importance."

"Is he waiting below?"

Mr. Purkess bowed assentingly.

"Show him up."

The valet bowed a second time, and retired.

"What can this low fellow want?" thought Starlinghurst. "Nothing that is likely to be agreeable to me, I fear. Not a second lesson in the noble art of self-defence, I judge. Perhaps to borrow money. I understand he is left without a sou. In that case, I shall civilly refer him to my tailor. Here he comes."

Arthur Taswell came into the room with a formal bow. His face was extremely pale, his features were firmly set, his hand trembled. A man may be possessed of an average amount of personal courage, and yet feel nervous when about to commence an interview which he knows will almost certainly terminate in an appeal to arms.

"Excuse the piece of paper, sir, on which I sent up my name. I have no cards with me."

Starlinghurst bowed, and, as he observed that the dress worn by his former opponent was shabby and discoloured, began to feel almost a sensation of compassion for him.

"Take a seat, sir," he said, "and please to favour me with the nature of your business."

Taswell was silent for some moments, and then began thus:

"You have, perhaps, not forgotten our rencontre in the public street?"

The dandy's slender stream of pity was immediately frozen up by this exordium; he assumed his usual air of *insouciance*, and replied:

"In which you got the worst of it? No, I have not."

"I got the worst, indeed," said Taswell, bitterly. "Weeks of confinement in a common jail."

"Was I responsible for that? Did I fill your pockets with seditious papers?"

"You hounded on the mob against me; but let that pass. For my own injuries I am willing to forgive you. I come on behalf of another person who has suffered far deeper wrongs at your hands."

"Your plebeian friend with the long hair, I presume?"

"William Lancefield? No. He is a man, able when at liberty from prison to redress his own

injuries if he pleases. No, sir, I come on the part of a woman—a defenceless, helpless woman, who visited me unasked, and besought me to obtain justice from you. The woman I speak of should have been the wife of William Lancefield, but for your villany. You know now whom I mean—Harriet Petworth."

"Excuse the remark I am about to make," said the dandy, coolly. "I don't believe you."

"You call me a liar! That is sufficient insult to warrant a challenge."

"I simply repeat that I don't believe you. I have known Mrs. Norland for many years, and I am certain that she would not entrust the guardianship of her so-called rights and wrongs to a stranger such as you. Come, I see how the case stands. Purkess!" said the dandy, ringing a small hand-bell.

The valet appeared.

"Purkess, take this person into another apartment, and see how much money he wants. You can arrange it with my tailor. I should have thought more highly of your gentility, Mr. Taswell, if you had frankly asked me for a loan, for, upon my soul, I pity any poor devil who is hard run; but to come and extort it in this manner is beyond bearing."

"Take your hand off me, sir!" exclaimed Taswell, throwing the valet's hand, which had been laid lightly on his shoulder, rudely aside. "And

now, sir," he continued, confronting Starlinghurst, "will you fight me now? Not with fists; I don't profess to understand that polite art—but with cold steel, or with powder and ball?"

"Purkess, leave the room. You must be a lunatic, Mr. Taswell."

"A lunatic, am I? Is she a lunatic who sends me now to extort that justice which, if you had possessed the lowest feelings of humanity, you would have freely yielded her years ago? You are about to marry, and leave the victim of your early sin to misery and despair."

"Mr. Taswell, this much I will condescend to answer you. If Mrs. Norland, or Harriet Petworth, as you choose to call her, has any favour to ask of me, let her do it in person. I will brook no interference on the part of others."

"Very well, sir; then I demand satisfaction for all the injuries and insults you have heaped on her and on me."

"I shall give you none. Go about your business——"

"Coward! you dare not face cold steel."

"I dare anything when I choose, but I don't choose now. My present occupation is not fighting, but marrying. Some years hence, when my bride and I grow tired of each other, and life becomes a burden, I may be able to accommodate you. At present, life is too full of enjoyment for me to risk ending it in so absurd a fashion."

"Villain!" exclaimed Taswell, doubling his fist, and shaking it in the face of his adversary, "you shall never marry that beloved girl. One of us shall die first!"

Mr. Starlinghurst rang his bell the second time.

As Purkess appeared, he said:

"Here, turn this infernal scoundrel out of the house. Should he resist, hand him over to the watch. He rants worse than any play-actor at Goodman's Fields."

Mr. Purkess, who was a person of powerful build, and a man of prompt action, immediately screwed his knuckles into Arthur Taswell's neck, and by main force thrust him down stairs, opened the street-door, and banged it in his face as he thrust him out.

Such was the ignominious termination of Arthur Taswell's second interview with Starlinghurst. It is a mistake to suppose that in a quarrel the man who has right on his side must always assert that right in the most becoming manner. Frederick Starlinghurst was a cold-blooded, selfish, worthless fellow, while Taswell was kind, warm-hearted, and generous; but certainly any unprejudiced spectator of their colloquy, who had listened to the melodramatic, passionate taunts of the one, and the calm, dignified replies of the other, would have been inclined to think that right lay with the latter.

CHAPTER XX.

CROSSING SWORDS.

ARTHUR TASWELL wandered away from the house with heedless footsteps, caring little whither he went, so absorbed was he in the contemplation of the numerous misfortunes which had befallen him during the last few weeks. Like the patriarch of old, calamity after calamity had smitten him down, the Chaldeans and Sabeans had harried his wealth, while a mighty wind, smiting the castle of happiness which he had built, had buried all his fondest hopes beneath the ruins. Even to speak in plain prose, he had suffered not a little. On Christmas-day, 1794, he was rich in worldly goods, respected by his friends and acquaintances, betrothed in marriage to a girl whom he had known and loved tenderly from childhood. By the end of the succeeding February, his wealth had been melted in a sea of speculation, his sweetheart had

rejected him for a worthless fop, at whose hands he had twice received ignominious punishment, he had suffered imprisonment, and, on quitting jail, had discovered that poverty and politics had combined to alienate all his old friends.

Unlike the patriarch Job, his adversities had not taught him resignation. His spirit burned with a desire for vengeance. He could have forgiven Starlinghurst for having injured him, but he could not forgive him for injuries which made the aggrieved person appear ridiculous. He was bent on revenge. But no base scheme of hidden mischief occupied his brain, nor did he dream of assassination. He resolved that Starlinghurst should fight him in fair combat. He determined to provide the necessary weapons and watch his opportunity. But before doing so he judged it advisable to ascertain Mrs. Norland's place of abode, in order to hear from her own lips a reiterated demand for justice or revenge. He reckoned that by this time she had probably visited the old recluse of Snodland marshes, and returned to London. To gain this information, it was necessary to visit Chigwood's shop, whither, accordingly, he repaired. It was the day preceding the night of Loveridge's intended rescue and Chigwood's premeditated flight. Taswell found the barber silent and preoccupied.

"What, back already?" exclaimed that gentleman.

"Yes. I returned on private business."

"Humph. I fear you're but a lukewarm delegate. The Corresponding Society won't be over well pleased."

"Dillygates didn't ought to have no private affairs," observed the red-faced patriot, who was being lathered preparatory to shaving. "If you takes the People's money, you ought to do the People's work, young gentleman."

"I did not come here to argue the point with you," said Taswell. "I have kept a faithful journal of my labours, which, with the unexpended balance of cash, I have forwarded to the secretary. Two guineas I have reserved for myself to support me until I find some other means of subsistence."

Mr. Chigwood sighed at the thought of a number of good serviceable guineas having gone into the hands of any one excepting himself, and said, "You should have handed the money back to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the red-faced man, "Chigwood 'ud ha' done a sight more good with it (you needn't put the brush in my mouth, Jemmy) than the London Correspondents. They're a parcel of jabbering, scribbling fools. The B. C. for my money. They'd have inwested the cash in pikes, or treated the thirsty throats of good patriots to a drop of gin, eh, Jemmy?"

The hairdresser made no reply to this remark but said, rather drily:

"And what do you want with me, Citizen Taswell?"

"I wish to ascertain Mrs. Norland's direction."

"For what purpose?"

"Simply to thank her for her kindness, and have a few words with her in private."

"Humph," muttered Mr. Chigwood. "You won't do much good there. However, here it is." The barber gave the required address to Taswell, who immediately turned on his heel for the purpose of leaving the shop.

"What's to be done with all this rubbidge?" asked Bildad, appearing at the door which led into the inner room, and holding up a dingy white garment. "It looks like a nightgown."

"Most valuable," replied Mr. Chigwood. "A Roman costume, which one of Gattrell's old apprentices made years ago. Pack it up; it will just suit our purpose."

"Here's a pair of swords, too," continued Bildad, holding up two old-fashioned weapons, the rusty blades of which were visible through the worm-eaten scabbards.

Taswell's curiosity had been excited, and he lingered to hear the above conversation. At the sight of the swords his eyes glistened.

"Mr. Chigwood," he said, "I will give you a guinea for them."

The barber examined the articles in question. "Very well, Mr. Taswell," he replied, "I'll accom-

modate you. But mind, I consider I'm only taking back money that should rightfully have been returned to me."

The young man paid the money, and wrapped the swords, in order to conceal them, in a sheet of paper.

"That's the ticket," remarked the red-faced man, as he surveyed his shaven chin in the mirror. "I allers likes to see a good citizen with arms in his fist. Twenty thousand of them 'ere in patriot hands, and Georgy-Porgy with all his cussed crew might take ship for Hanover. Good morning, citizens all."

"Are you going to fight anybody?" asked Mr. Chigwood.

"No," replied Taswell, colouring; "I am thinking of trying the theatrical profession, and they may be of use to me."

With a parting salutation he quitted the shop, and directed his steps westward.

Meanwhile Starlinghurst was engaged in earnest conversation with his former mistress at her house in York-street, St. James's.

"Well, Harry, how is the world using you?" he asked, as he seated himself with careless familiarity.

"Oh, Frederick, how pleased I am to see you! I thought you had deserted me for ever."

"Nonsense, child; of course I shall come to see

you as usual, unless my charming Floretta takes it into her head to be jealous."

"Frederick, it makes my heart ache to hear you speak thus. I cannot endure to think that your affections, which belong to me alone, should be bestowed on another."

"My affections will still be with you, dearest Harry. I marry Miss Anerley simply as a matter of convenience. What more can you want?"

"Much more. I want to be your wife. I want you to recollect your ancient promise. Remember, you vowed solemnly that if ever that man into whose hands you sold me—pardon the expression, but it is the truth—that if ever that man died you would become my husband. Will you not redeem your promise now?"

"It is impossible. You have no certain proof of Norland's death. I have no desire to add bigamy to my other virtues."

Mrs. Norland covered her face with her hands, and exclaimed, "Oh, how I am punished for my evil doing! I cast off my first lover, and was deserted by my second. Not content with selling me once, Frederick, to a worthless unfeeling man, with whom I passed a life of misery, you would now make merchandise of me again."

"You are a sentimental fool, Harry," said the dandy, rudely. "At your age, and with your experience, you should be ashamed to pule and whine

like a school-girl. It is for your interest that I would have you marry Sir Goodwin. He is rich, good-tempered, and a perfect gentleman. What more would you have? He is sixty, I allow, and suffers from the gout. So much the better. In ten years you may reckon on being a wealthy widow, still young and handsome."

"You do not fear lest Sir Goodwin should commit bigamy," said Mrs. Norland, bitterly.

"Not I, in truth. He adores you, and is willing to take the risk, which is, after all, slight enough. I tell you the truth; I don't adore you. I think you a very fascinating woman, when you are gay and good-tempered; but when you begin pining and bewailing your fate, you are simply intolerable."

"Thank you, Mr. Starlinghurst, for your frankness."

"And where is that Bengalee attendant of yours, Harry?"

"She has been absent for several days. She left a slip of paper on the table merely telling me of her departure."

"So much the better; we shall be undisturbed. Harriet, I have what is vulgarly called a crow to pluck with you."

"With me?"

"Yes, madam. Your professions of ardent affection and desires for marriage are all hollow and hypocritical. You have been telling the story

of your grievances, and urging on your new admirer to wreak his vengeance on my unlucky person."

"Never, Frederick, never. You shall hear the truth. I related to Sir Goodwin the history of our early loves in hope it would put an end to his tiresome entreaties, and induce him to persuade you to give your hand to me rather than to his daughter."

"Truly, madam, I may now in turn congratulate you for your exceeding sincerity. So you tried to do me all the harm you could with Sir Goodwin?"

"Harm, Frederick? Was it harm to appeal to his feelings as a father?"

"Never mind; you failed. The Baronet was far too good a judge to sacrifice at one blow an elegant son-in-law, and (don't be angry, Harriet) a lovely but exceedingly shrewish and *exigeant* wife. But, madam, I have not finished yet. You have told me what I did not know before, that you have made Sir Goodwin a confidant of your sorrows; permit me to add that you have admitted another person to the knowledge of these mysteries."

"Frederick, it is false. Not even Serafina, for years the recipient of all my griefs, has ever heard of our early attachment."

"Well, I trust it is so. I told the gentleman he was a liar, upon which he challenged me to fight him."

"You have accepted the challenge?"

"Why no. He is a vulgar plebeian, so I ordered my man to turn him out of the house, which operation Purkess executed with his usual fidelity."

Here the servant entered the room, and said, "Mr. Taswell is below, madam, and earnestly desires to see you."

"Oh, ho! now I understand!" exclaimed Starlinghurst, before Mrs. Norland was able to reply. "Come to report progress, of course? By Heaven, this treachery is enough to make even an expectant bridegroom's blood boil. Harriet, your sex screens you from personal injury otherwise," he said, savagely, doubling his fist, "I should like to crush out the beauty that still remains in your false face now and for ever! No, madam! I will punish you by another means, through the person of your faithful adorer below stairs. I shall have the pleasure of spitting this hired bravo of yours like a woodcock. He has felt the weight of my fist before, he shall now learn the skill of my sword-arm."

During this outburst, Mrs. Norland and her servant remained speechless with astonishment and terror. At length the former said:

"Frederick, believe me, I never saw this man in my life!"

"You lie!" he shouted. "What else can I expect but lies from the progeny of a common soldier

and some camp-following trull? Let me pass!" he exclaimed, throwing the women, who were clinging to his skirts, rudely aside, and snatching up his hat and cane. "Good-bye, Mrs. Norland." And he darted rapidly down the stairs.

In all her experience of him, Mrs. Norland had never seen her former lover so excited. The usually calm, sneering, impassible dandy, had been transformed in a few moments into a coarse, vulgar, shouting bully. Starlinghurst had some excuse for his wrath. He verily believed that the pretty creature, who had just been endeavouring to melt him with pathetic words, and looks of the tenderest affection, was all the while engaged in a cowardly plot against his life. He tore open the front door with such violence that Taswell, who was leaning unthinkingly against it, stumbled inwards, and as he caught at the panels to save himself from falling, let the parcel which he carried in his hand drop upon the floor.

"Villanous wretch!" exclaimed Starlinghurst, as his eye perceived the swords which the fall had disengaged from their paper covering, "so you meant murder, after all!"

"There are two," answered Taswell, sternly; "one for each of us. Draw and defend yourself."

As he spoke, he closed the door with his foot. The murky rays of a foggy March evening struggled through the fanlight, just illuminating the

hall, in which the combatants stood, sufficiently to enable them to distinguish each other's movements. At the unwonted sound of clashing swords, the terrified women, who at first had stood at the top of the stairs, descended several steps.

"Frederick, I implore you to forbear," cried Mrs. Norland.

"Thank you, madam," replied the dandy, to whom the excitement of action had restored his usual coolness. "And allow myself to be quietly finished off by your bravo? Vastly obliged to you."

"Martha," she said to the servant, clasping her hands, "what can we do?"

"Oh! mistress!" answered the frightened girl, "let us hide ourselves in the garret!"

The clash of swords continued. Starlinghurst was a practised swordsman, and having discovered after a few passes that his antagonist was totally ignorant of the art, he contented himself with parrying his desperate thrusts. He was even beginning to enjoy his adversary's purposeless rage and blind onsets; he was reflecting whereabouts would be the prettiest place to pink him, for he determined that such a villain, as he believed Taswell to be, should not go unscathed, when the latter suddenly drew back into the farther corner of the hall, and then rushed forward with the leap of a tiger. The movement threw Starlinghurst for an

instant off his guard, and he felt the point of his opponent's rusty weapon enter his arm. The dandy could no longer remain cool and unconcerned; the sharp pain angered him; besides, he saw that he had to deal with a furious adversary, whose headlong violence almost sufficed in place of skill. He accordingly set his teeth firmly, and once more stood upon his guard. Again Taswell repeated his backward movement and his forward spring. But this time his sword was sent flying out of his hand, while Starlinghurst's weapon pierced his shoulder. He uttered a loud cry, and fell, apparently lifeless, on the floor.

Starlinghurst flung the sword away with a shuddering movement of disgust, and exclaiming, "Harriet, you are my witness that he brought his punishment on himself," hastily quitted the house.

For many minutes the two women, who had sunk down speechless with horror, remained seated on the stairs, gazing on the hideous spectacle before them, which the approaching darkness of night was rapidly rendering more shadowy and terrible. They felt as we are apt to feel when excited by extraordinary emotions, that they were looking dreamily at the scene of a mimic phantasmagoria, which possessed no real existence.

The more coarsely-moulded nature of the maid-servant was the first to awake from this lethargy.

"Mistress," she whispered, clutching Mrs. Nor-

land's arm, "think you he is dead? I dare not venture in the dark to touch him. By this time his hand will be growing stiff and cold. I will make shift to step over him and rouse the neighbours."

"Not so!" exclaimed Mrs. Norland. "Oh, Martha! you know not the force of woman's love; I would not for worlds have a hair of my Frederick's head injured. Admit the neighbours, and they would say that he murdered this man. Rather let us discover if he still lives. Do you go to the kitchen, and strike a light."

Martha presently returned, bearing a candle in her hand. The two women cautiously approached the body. Mrs. Norland opened his shirt, which was saturated with blood, and placed her hand upon his breast.

"His heart still beats," she said, "gently, and you can hear his breathing. He is not dead. See, here is the wound. Oh! what a little passage it is through which life may ebb away! Martha, we will put out all our strength, and carry him up-stairs. I think his wound is not mortal. I have often heard my father speak of these matters. This is too high, too near the shoulder, to pierce the heart."

The united exertions of the two women easily sufficed to carry Arthur Taswell up-stairs, and to deposit him on a bed.

"I will now fetch a surgeon," said Martha.

"A surgeon! Oh, Martha! I know none whom I can trust to keep a secret! The surgeon will disclose the adventure, and Frederick will be ruined. Stay; I have it, Martha; you shall hasten in a coach to St. Antholin's-court, and bring Mr. Chigwood, the hairdresser. He has studied surgery. I have seen him cure the natives in Bengal when their own doctors were in despair. Say nothing of your errand, but silently hand him this note."

Mrs. Norland hurriedly wrote a few lines, and having despatched Martha, took up her station by the wounded man's bedside. The orifice of the injury had been bound up, and had ceased to bleed, but Mrs. Norland feared lest the inward flow of blood should suffocate her patient. She poured several spoonfuls of wine into his mouth, and was rejoiced to find that he was able to swallow. Presently his eyes opened slightly, his lips trembled, and he murmured, "Floretta, is that you?"

"Poor youth!" sighed Mrs. Norland, turning away to suppress a tear, "he is still faithful to his faithless love. No," she replied, gently, "it is not Floretta."

"Lucy, then?" he said, dreamily. "But these are not Lucy's yellow locks. The tint on these is more golden. Am I in heaven, and are you an angel tending me?"

"Alas, no! I am but a poor sinful woman. My name is Harriet Norland."

"Mrs. Norland? No, that are you not. Your voice is far sweeter and gentler than hers. And her hair is——"

"Of what colour?" asked Mrs. Norland, eagerly, unable to restrain her curiosity, in spite of her patient's exhausted condition.

"Black and glossy—blacker than my beloved Flor——"

He sank back, uttered a sigh of weariness, and ceased speaking. For a few moments his nurse feared that he was dead. She administered more wine, and presently had the satisfaction of hearing his deep regular breathing. She did not venture to disturb him with further questioning, but sat patiently at his side with her eyes fixed upon his pale face.

"As he lies thus," she murmured, "his delicate, finely-cut features, and clear complexion, seem almost womanly. I can scarcely believe that this calm tranquil face was an hour ago agitated by such furious passions. Poor boy! he has suffered much. He has lost his fortune, his reputation, his love. The last is, I think, the worst loss of all. Oh! what miseries we make our fellow-creatures suffer through our follies and our crimes! This poor young man might have been Floretta's happy

husband. Why should her wealthy father demand more wealth? Then, perhaps, Frederick might have been persuaded to yield me the rights he owes to me. But what could have induced this youth to have asserted that I had instructed him to seek reparation at Frederick's hands? There is some mystery here. Some woman has, for evil purposes of her own, assumed my name. Who can it be?"

Here the lips of the wounded man moved slightly. Mrs. Norland bent down in order to catch the faintest sound.

"How could she know I was at Rochester?" he murmured.

At these words Mrs. Norland started slightly, and, taking the candle, softly quitted the room. Entering the dining-room, she proceeded to the bookcase.

"Can my suspicions be correct?" she said. "Serafina is usually no reader, and the manner in which the other day she came in hurriedly and took a book from the shelf excited my curiosity. When I found it was merely a road-book I was satisfied, and her departure directly afterwards seemed to explain the matter. I will turn to Kent. Ah!" she exclaimed, "it is as I thought. A thumb-nail has distinctly scored a line both above and below the word 'Rochester.' Oh,

Heaven!" she said, as she laid the book aside, "I seem to be surrounded by foes on all sides. What horrible treachery is this that Serafina has been guilty of? Did she desire, for her own purposes, to excite this poor misguided youth to assassinate my Frederick? It seems but too likely. Yet her face—I never thought of that. Her black face would surely have betrayed her. This youth, however much blinded by angry passions, would have hesitated to believe in a Harriet Norland with a chocolate skin."

She returned to the bed-chamber, and said aloud, as if in soliloquy, "My complexion is at least as fair as Mrs. Norland's."

Presently the wounded man replied, in a feeble voice, "I know not. She refused to raise her veil. But I kissed her hand."

"Her pretty white hand?" interposed Mrs. Norland.

"It was gloved. A lilac glove. I kissed it twice."

Mrs. Norland clasped her hands together, and murmured, "My doubts are now resolved. Serafina is not a woman; she is a fiend. And what is worse, I fear her as a child dreads a severe teacher. She will soon return, and can I brave her wrath when she discovers that the ill-gotten guineas in yonder oaken coffer have vanished away? Did I

but know whither to fly, I would fly this very night. I would be content to dwell anywhere, so that I might honestly earn bread enough to eat. Ah me! I wonder what has become of my poor old spinning-wheel in Fessenden village? How joyfully I could sit down to it again!"

While she was soliloquising thus, the rattle of a hackney-coach was heard in the street outside, and in a few moments Martha re-entered the house accompanied by Mr. Chigwood.

The hairdresser was a man of the world. He had stated on a former occasion that he was an old traveller and surprised at nothing. Consequently he traversed the hall with the most unquestioning coolness, although the two swords still lay there, a chair which had been overset in the contest remained prostrate, and a deep stain of blood marked where the wounded man had lain. He silently followed Mrs. Norland up-stairs, and proceeded at once to examine Taswell's injury. The young man was awake, and tossed restlessly from side to side, while the flush on his cheek showed that fever had set in.

"The wound in itself is trivial," said the barber-surgeon. "The point of the sword has been stopped by the shoulder-blade, or more mischief might have ensued. He has bled freely, which is all the better; but the bluntness of the weapon

has made a jagged instead of a clean cut, while the rust will help to keep it from healing kindly."

"Citizen Chigwood!" murmured Arthur Taswell.

"Hush! my dear sir," interposed the hairdresser. "We are here at the Court end of the town, where there are nothing but lords and ladies; besides, I must forbid talking."

"Is Starlinghurst killed?" continued the young man.

"You wounded him slightly, I believe," said Mrs. Norland.

"Not killed? Thank God, thank God!" murmured Taswell.

As soon as Mr. Chigwood had completed his surgical duties, and had administered a quieting draught to his patient, he was beckoned out of the room by Mrs. Norland, who detailed to him the story of the combat, and told him plainly that she believed Serafina to be the author of all the mischief.

The cautious barber listened in silence, and then said, "Excuse my hurrying away, madam, but this is an important night at St. Antholin's-court. We hope to effect Mr. Loveridge's release; I also purpose removing my household gods—bears, boys, and all—to some more genial locality. Owing to the jealousy of my landlord, Mr. Gattrell, this last is an operation best conducted at dead of night."

"Oh! Mr. Chigwood, are you going to quit London?" exclaimed Mrs. Norland. "I shall not have a single friend left. Would that Martha and I could accompany you? But then there is that poor wounded man——"

"We will take him also; the country air will cure him marvellously quick. Mrs. Norland," said the hairdresser, speaking excitedly, "I have a lofty ambition, a high purpose to fulfil. The beginning will be poor and humble; the culmination will be magnificent. Listen, madam. I am not going to detail the nature of my plans. For the present, they must be locked in my own bosom. Let us speak of practical matters. You wish to escape from this frivolous artificial life?"

"I do—I do, most earnestly."

"You dread Serafina's wrath?" continued Mr. Chigwood, pointing to the oaken coffer.

"I am ashamed to say that the prospect of her return fills me with terror."

"No shame at all. I fear her myself. She is a devil incarnate; and one of my reasons for quitting London in this mysterious manner is to give her the slip. I will now propose a plan of operations. Should Loveridge be removed to the Tower to-night, it will probably be after twelve o'clock. It is now half-past seven. We shall not be able to start until Loveridge's release has been

effected. But you had better quit this house at once. Pack your boxes and other necessaries, empty the oaken coffer (not forgetting the forty guineas due to the turnkey, which I will find means of forwarding to him), then let you, Martha, and Mr. Taswell take a coach (or a couple of coaches, if one is insufficient) for Maze Pond, in the Borough. Here is the address. You will find the proprietor of the caravan there, a very civil person. He has strict orders to keep his vehicle ready at five minutes' notice. At a given signal from my apprentice, Bildad Flack, he will drive to St. Antholin's-court, and load up my goods and live stock. We shall return to Maze Pond for you, madam, and shall hope, if all goes well, to be fairly on the Dover-road by daybreak. One word of caution before I leave. Do not disturb the sad mementoes of this unfortunate duel. Let the floor remain unscoured, let the chair stay as it is, overset; let the weapons lie where they are at present. 'Tis almost a pity to leave the swords," quoth Mr. Chigwood to himself; "they are good useful tools, and worth at least half-a-guinea apiece, but, after what has occurred, their possession might get me into trouble."

"Your plan sounds admirable," exclaimed Mrs. Norland. "At the very idea of quitting this house and this hateful life my heart leaps with excite-

ment. Martha will be well pleased to go. She is a simple country girl, and dislikes London ways and London hours. I have but one pang in leaving. I shall leave behind the rightful owner of my affections."

"Forget him, madam, I beseech you," said Chigwood. "He is not worthy of you. I must now take my departure."

"Take, then, the forty guineas for the turnkey," said Mrs. Norland. "I shall still have nearly twenty left, besides dresses and articles of jewellery."

The hairdresser clutched the gold with respectful avidity, sighed deeply at the thought that it was not his own, and then quitted the house.

As soon as he was gone, Martha and her mistress set to work with the utmost activity to pack up their clothing. Mrs. Norland was scrupulously careful to remove nothing from the house but her own personal wearing apparel and trinkets. The whole of the furniture and other utensils she left for Serafina's benefit, fully explaining her intentions in a note, which she placed in the corner of the mirror in Serafina's bedroom. She pointed out that the sale of the furniture, after paying rent, taxes, and all outstanding expenses (including her own nominal wages), would far more than repay her for the contents of the oaken box; in short, that for the hundred and twenty guineas taken

by her mistress she would receive nearly four hundred.

As she paused occasionally from her labours, Mrs. Norland could not help reflecting that she was embarking on a very rash enterprise. Equivocal as her position was in London, still it gave her a certain *status* in society; she was now about to abandon this and plunge into an unknown sea of adventure. But this very notion of adventure pleased her. She longed to break through the weary trammels of the sham fashionable life she had lately led, and begin existence, as it were, anew. Besides, when she heard that Mr. Chigwood was about to take the Dover-road, she remembered that in the county of Kent she had one kind friend who was in some measure acquainted with her past career, and who could even excuse her having set up a gaming-table, being well aware of Serafina's persuasive wiles and extraordinary influence. This friend we shall probably meet at a later stage of our history.

On the whole, therefore, though her heart fluttered with anxiety, Harriet Norland rejoiced at the prospect of her journey.

In less than two hours all the arrangements were completed; a coach was brought to the door, to which, assisted by the driver, Martha conveyed Arthur Taswell. A mattress was placed in the

coach, on which the wounded man was laid, and, owing to the opiate potion which Mr. Chigwood had administered, his sleep was unbroken during the journey. Five-and-forty minutes of jolting over Westminster Bridge brought the whole party safely to their destination. On crossing the Borough High-street they met the Chatham coach, which had been seriously delayed by the breaking of an axletree. Little did Serafina think as she sat inside, with her thick veil down to keep out the chill night air of the river, that her truant mistress was passing within a few yards at her side. Had she known it, she would have opened the door and sprung from her seat at the risk of her neck. For the person who was thus running away was a valuable slave, highly useful as a decoy to the gentlemen of fashion, who risked their guineas at faro; and worth five thousand pounds any day in the Bedford-square market. Little did Sir Goodwin know who was running away that night as he nursed his gouty foot, pored over the account-sales of his sugar, or kissed the gilt-edged note which six weeks before he had received from his coy Amanda. And now Amanda is flying away. Like a bird of the woods, long caged and confined, fed with artificial food, taught to sing unnatural songs for the amusement of her captors, she has watched the opportunity when the door of her prison was left

open, and has escaped into the fresh air and the green fields. She would fain return to her native nest, but the hand of the spoiler has been there, and, in place of mirth and contentment, she would find silent desolation. Her wings are weak from imprisonment, she is unused to liberty, she is apt to miss her way, hawks and other birds of prey hover round, ready to devour her. Will she at last reach a place of refuge for her weary soul?

END OF VOL. I.

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